



# EPOCH OF TWILIGHT

BOOK 03

*Don't Play People For A Fool*

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# Epoch of Twilight

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by

**Don't Play People For A Fool**

# Synopsis

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Have you ever thought that the state of the world as it presently is, could revert to the laws of the ancients? When a series of strange incidents beginning with the disappearance of his friend led Luo Yuan to question the possibility of an apocalypse, he becomes embroiled in the midst of a global-scale chaos.

Evolution has turned the flora and fauna of the vast and bountiful Earth into something that had never been seen before. Coincidentally, the all-dominating Homo sapiens have ended up at the bottom of the food chain. From mystery to crisis, will Luo Yuan discover a means of saving humanity by racing to the top of the food chain? Or will he strive in accordance with the law of the jungle? It is the dawn of an age of the survival of the fittest.

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# Chapter 201: Forced Landing

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Luo Yuan jumped up, scurried towards Zhao Yali, and felt her burning hot forehead. He was shocked and delighted at the same time, but more shocked than the latter because evolution was nothing but a risky game. The winner triumphs, while the loser is left stuck in a form that was neither human nor beast, losing all senses and reasoning, before finally assimilating to a beast, like the misfortune that befell Chen Xianfeng. Besides, with the electromagnetic storm, now was not an ideal time, as it was not only threatening but had danger lurking behind every rock. If anything were to happen at all, the result would most likely be an unpredictable one.

Luo Yuan paced the floor, but since it had already occurred, there was nothing he could do about it. As she entered the stage of evolution, they can only surrender her to fate and wait patiently in silence.

Huang Jiahui, Huo Dong and the rest were feeling uneasy as they looked at the unconscious Zhao Yali. The feeling was indescribable, after all, their mental strength, ability and hard work were all far more superior than Zhao Yali's, but she, who dared not even fire a gun, had the chance to evolve, while they were left behind. But alas, they were already used to such situations, and felt better as soon as they expressed their emotions.

“Don't touch her, it's dangerous, just lay her down onto the floor!” said Luo Yuan, when he realized that Wang Xianguang was still holding on to Zhao Yali. “She is in the midst of evolving and may subconsciously attack any time. If you aren't careful enough, you may risk danger yourself.”



Wang Xianguang nodded in silence and laid her down on the floor gently.

“The static electricity seems stronger now!” Wang Shishi pressed her hair down and exclaimed. As her hands rubbed onto the strands of her hair, it ignited a series of fine sparks.

“What’s happening? Aren’t we already flying at lower elevation?” Lin Xiaoji asked nervously.

“This is probably an after-effect of the electromagnetic waves above, but we will be fine soon.” Huo Dong spoke a lot, but he could not help but to gulp a mouthful.

As time passed, the static electricity in the air grew stronger. Even the slightest movement that rubbed against their clothes, instigated a series of sparks on their skin, hurting them as a result. The lights that had already extinguished were now blinking, creating a mysterious atmosphere.

This tensed up the atmosphere further; even Luo Yuan looked rather glum.

Then, a sudden loud bang, accompanied by the sound of broken glass was heard before the transport plane jolted strongly. A few of them were even flung out of their spots by the enormous force, rolled a few rounds before they managed to hold onto the iron chains which were used to stabilize the goods, to stabilize themselves.

Then, they felt their body sinking, and their heart skipped a beat. Gloom and terror were plastered across their faces.

The transport plane was ascending!

Commander Xia staggered his way towards the cockpit, and Luo Yuan followed suit.

As they pushed open the door, a freezing cold wind whistled through the broken hole on the left side of the glass. The hole was about the size of a basketball and was framed by spiderweb-like cracks, with fresh blood and human remains scattered around.

“Close the door, hurry!” the co-pilot shouted nervously. His face appeared greenish, either due to the freezing cold or his immense fear. Streaming down his head was fresh blood, with lots of glass debris cutting into his scalp. Evidently, he was injured when the glass shattered to smithereens.

When Luo Yuan and Commander Xia saw that gaping hole, they were consumed with shock and shut the door behind them at once.

Luo Yuan was able to pick up a burnt odor permeating the air. The effect of the hole on the glass was a secondary issue, but primarily, the critical damage was quite obviously located at the head of the plane.

“What’s happening? What’s happening?” Commander Xia was

shocked and frightened, “We will be arriving soon; what wicked idea do you have up your sleeves?”

“You seek answers from me; whom should I seek answers from then?” the captain asked with a hint of sarcasm, while slamming onto the steering wheel angrily.

A shrill, inanimate voice resonated from the dashboard to warn them.

“Damn it, the gas tank is leaking.”

“What about the backup gas tank?” asked Commander Xia, stopping the argument in light of such a dangerous situation

“F\*ck! From where would we have gotten the backup gas tank, we are certainly not flying around the globe! The original design had it, but it wasn't deployed because they were f\*cking saving on the manufacturing costs!” the captain shouted, consumed by anger and fear.

The plane kept ascending. As the altitude increased, the static electricity became stronger. The imperceptible electrical current spread to the wall, the glass, the dashboard and eventually filled the air with crackling sounds. If it was not for the circuits that had a strong ability to defend itself from the electromagnetic effects, it would have exploded by now.

Seeing what was happening had caused Luo Yuan's hair to stand



on its end. He then suddenly thought of something and shouted, “Don't fly up any further, the static electricity would light up the gas tank and we'll all die!”

Their face immediately paled to a ghastly white.

The pilot took a deep breath to calm his overwhelming emotions, trying hard to control the plane while it began to descend. Comparing to the possible attacks at a lower altitude, self-explosion was definitely more dangerous.

There was a pin-drop silence in the cockpit, with only whistling sounds gushing from the hole when the cold breeze blew in. The blood at the edge of the hole had begun to coagulate and freeze up.

Commander Xia consciously felt his chest where the picture of his wife and daughter was. He opened his mouth a few times but could articulate no words. It was only after a few attempts, he said in a brittle voice, “How far... can we fly? Are we able to arrive our destination with this amount of gas left?”

“The leakage is serious... we may not even be able to reach half of the distance!” the pilot looked at the amount of the petrol, kept silent for a while, before he shook his head in despair. “As the electromagnetic storm may strike anytime, it is very dangerous to fly in the air with this leakage. While the gas is still sufficient, I'll try to look for a place for a forced landing later. Both of you can leave now!”

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Both Luo Yuan and Commander Xia went back to the cabin with a heavy heart.

“What’s happening? I seemed to have heard you guys quarreling?” Huang Jiahui asked.

Luo Yuan shook his head and said, “We’ve got some bad news. Please prepare yourself. As we’re experiencing a serious case right now, we’ll have no choice but to conduct a forced landing soon.”

“Commander, is this true?” a soldier asked in disbelief.

Commander Xia nodded heavily while still feeling the picture on his chest, but could utter no words again.

All was silent!

The oppressing atmosphere left the passengers gasping.

Shortly after, a loud bang ensued, and the metal of the transport plane clinked loudly. Even the solid walls of the cabin suddenly curved in, causing the thick iron flooring to roll-up, revealing an inch-wide gap.

With a tremendous jolt, the iron chains that fastened the cargoes clanked and sparked.

Luo Yuan sprinted over and held onto Zhao Yali, just before they felt their bodies drop.

“Watch out!” he shouted nervously.

The plane continued to decrease in altitude in an abrupt manner, and the speed seemed to be faster, making them feel as if they were floating. An extreme fear had struck them and all their faces were ghastly pale.

The notion of time, especially at this moment, seemed to have slowed down.

The body of Luo Yuan was roped with thick veins, his hair were standing on its end and his mental wellbeing was strained, while waiting for the coming of the last moment. He also did his utmost best to sense his surroundings but he could sense only fierce wind.

Just when everyone was in a dire state of desperation, the sudden drops gradually stopped but but when they wanted to heave a sigh of relief, Luo Yuan suddenly shouted, “Hold on tight!”

They were jittery, but held onto the fixed iron chains tightly.

A loud bang soon ensued, followed by a continuous firework-like noise. The transport plane jolted, coupled with an overbearing squeaky noise, and some parts began to billow with thick smoke.

From Luo Yuan’s sensory perception, he found out that their

transport plane was crashing and breaking through the trees of various sizes because of the effects of the strong inertia. The force of the landing made them feel like a giant metallic monster rampaging through the forest.

Everyone was holding onto the iron chains tightly, but they were still forcefully flung up and down violently, sustaining some injuries no less.

The transport plane rampaged through a distance of about 500 to 600 meters before the plane's head crashed hard into a hill, and finally came to a halt!

## Chapter 202: Kunlun Mountains

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The mixture of gravel and mud poured down, covering more than half the entire cockpit.

This completely damaged the dark and heavy armored transport plane. Parts of the plane were cracked open due to the blast, and the other parts had smoke billowing, imminent of a potential explosion.

Seconds after the collision, a sharp and loud metal clink was heard and the silverish tip of a sharp blade protruded and extended further. Immediately, it carved a big circle on the body of the plane, as though cutting through tofu.

It was followed by a loud bang, and the carved circular metal was blown out to 4 to 5 meters away.

Figures after figures jumped out from the plane one after another. These people looked worn out, and almost all of them were wounded.

Luo Yuan handed Zhao Yali over to Wang Xianguang, and requested them to stay away as quickly as they can. He then came back immediately with a few other soldiers. They dragged out two badly injured bodies from the craft. Lo and behold, they appeared to be the pilots!

The huge collision had completely disfigured the shape of the plane, and the fallen gravels that followed had left no chance for

the pilots to escape, resulting in a tragic death. If not for Luo Yuan and the soldiers who dug with their bare hands, the bodies would have not been found.

Luo Yuan also wanted to rescue the giant lizard, but with the strength he had, he could not even move the containers. As he saw the smoke getting thicker, he had no choice but to dash out of the transport plane. The explosion of the transport plane would have not been able to kill the giant lizard, as it was still safely inside the container.

It was still midnight, and the surroundings was blanketed in complete darkness. As Luo Yuan possessed the ability of night vision, it posed no difficulty for him to see in the dark.

From the mountains to the valleys, and along with the precipitous hill, the endless forest stretched to the horizon. It akin to taking a peek into the primitive world, with no trace of civilization.

There was nothing else in the vicinity but a thick, endless forest.

The dense branches and leaves formed a net-like facade covering the sky, like a canopy of lush greenery.

Huge trees were everywhere, and some of its roots were even exposed. They were thick and rough, like a giant python, stretching out from ten to hundreds of meters away. Some rattan as thick as a human thigh were even intertwined.

Comparing to the forest in Jiangnan, which was managed by humans, the size of the trees were usually small. Unlike the ones here, which were usually enormous with dense, dark green leaves and coarse, dried barks, it gave an impression of old age, steeped in rich history.

Anyone can see that that they were no longer in a plain field, but in a pristine, and ancient forest. Even before the apocalypse, it was still a dangerous place to go, with numerous poisonous bugs and fierce creatures everywhere, making it hard to protect themselves. With the current apocalypse, it was no wonder that survival proved to be an arduous task.

“Does anyone know where we are?” asked Luo Yuan, after he checked on Zhao Yali’s condition. Although she was injured at the cockpit during the collision, she only suffered mild injuries, which thankfully, were non-fatal.

“I think this should be the Kunlun mountains... I’m not too sure exactly, but judging from the flight routes, we shouldn’t be too far away from the Reconstruction Area.” said Commander Xia with a gruff voice, as he shook his head. He was also injured, with blood dripping from his head, that stained almost his entire face.

Luo Yuan looked around at his surroundings, and began to feel somewhat annoyed.

The topographic features was a steep one, with high density of forests. Even if they were able to split the mountains and rivers apart, they would have still easily gotten lost. It seemed to be difficult to escape this.



All of a sudden, a loud boom broke the silence. The transport plane exploded into a gush of flames, which shot up hundreds of meters through the dark sky and formed a giant, dark mushroom cloud.

“Stay here! Shishi, keep vigil, I am going to take a look,” said Luo Yuan as he was worried for the safety of the giant lizard.

“Please come back as soon as possible!” pleaded Wang Jiahui, nervously.

The forest at dusk was resonating with a cacophony of noise, like sounds of insects chirping, beasts howling and sometimes, the ghostly laughter and wailing similar to those of a human being's. The darkness made them feel like they had entered hell or another dimension, reducing everyone to fear.

Luo Yuan nodded, and dashed to the transport plane.

A fire broke out all of a sudden but also disappeared as quickly as it appeared. Within seconds, what was left on the transport plane were just fumes of smoke.

Thanks to the insufficient gas, the explosion was less powerful. The metal rack in the transport plane remained perfectly intact.

Luo Yuan then climbed through the torn opening and made his way into the cabin. He then found out that some containers were

blackened, while two of them were sunken from the blast, resembling a deflated basketball.

Thankfully, the container that housed the giant lizard was still safely intact with only mere dents. After all, the container was specially protected by the extra protective layers, hence the explosion could not malform it completely.

Luo Yuan marched forward, brandished his Zhanmadao and cut off all the iron chains, which was used to hold and stabilize the container.

The tip of the knife cut into the gap of the container, traced the welded part, and swiftly, he cut it open.

Luo Yuan discovered that his giant lizard was awake, albeit its eyes partially opened, looking weak. The explosion could have most likely awaken it.

The giant lizard acknowledged Luo Yuan's presence upon laying eyes on him. It was whining weakly, as if seeking self-pity.

Unfortunately, Luoyuan had no idea what it was trying to say. He then pat the giant lizard's enormous head, and pacified it for a while before he resumed efforts in trying to free the giant lizard. Soon after, he cut open the container and the whole body of the giant lizard was finally free.

Sensing its freedom, it shook its head and struggled to stand up,

but as soon as it managed to stand up, its weak body slumped back onto the ground. It felt depressed, looked at Luo Yuan with its droopy eyelids, while whining helplessly.

It seems like the giant lizard still required a long time to recover completely. Luo Yuan looked at the time, and it showed that it was 12 o'clock at midnight, which was another five or six hours to sunrise. With this little time, it wouldn't be sufficient for the giant lizard to completely recover to its best state, and snap out of its anesthetic influence.

He hesitated for a while, went back to get the snakeskin storage bag, and picked up the giant snake's internal organs. Using a strong and sturdy string of grass, Luo Yuan tied and hung them together, which weighed about forty to fifty catties.

When he got back to the giant lizard, the smell of the treat invigorated its senses. It tried to raise its head and struggled to open its droopy eyelids as wide as possible, trying to please Luo Yuan, despite such a ferocious face.

To the giant lizard, these green rank mutated beasts were like top predators, superior in the food chain. Therefore, consuming its meat would bring unimaginable benefits, and might even trigger its body to evolve.

Luo Yuan threw the internal organs towards the giant lizard, initially aiming for the sides of its mouth, but he did not expect it to reach out and fiercely chomp hard on it with its giant mouth. With its neck merely stretched out, it gulped the whole bundle of meat of forty to fifty catties, defying the fact that it was still weak

prior to this.

The moment it had finished eating, it went back to its sickly appearance, and laid on the ground lazily.

Luo Yuan looked at it for a while, and quickly returned to his friend.

It was definitely not a safe place, especially the fact that it was an ancient forest prior to the apocalypse.

In terms of danger, Jiangnan could be ranked as slightly dangerous, but according to the standards here, it might even be medium to highly dangerous.

Due to the massive disturbance by the transport plane previously, most of the creatures might have already fled, but as the time flew by, more creatures had definitely returned.

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A pile of bonfire was burning vigorously at an open space not too far away from the transport plane.

A mutated beast with its skin already shredded, was pierced through by a wooden stick and hung onto a simple barbeque stand to be slow-cooked.

Golden liquefied fat was dripping onto the flames, further igniting the flames while it sizzled, spreading a rich and flavorful aroma.

That was a low rank mutated beast, which wandered into their grounds by itself, and was killed easily by Huo Dong with a slash.

If it was a high rank mutated beast, its muscles would have shrunk and harden while it burned, rendering it unchewable for the rest, except of course, for Luo Yuan.

They sat in a circle, talking and chatting while cautiously looking at the dark forest nearby.

Their surroundings were flickering with shadows; the branches resembled sharp claws of monsters, swaying under the dim light as though with threatening gestures.

It was their first time spending the night in the ancient forest, thus they could not help but to be spooked by this eerie experience.

“Guys, let’s make a checklist of how many provisions we have, as we might have to live in the forest for a while,” said Luo Yuan indifferently.

“We don’t have much things as we’ll be in the Reconstruction Area, we had already thrown out most of our things.” Wang Jiahui said with a heavy heart, before continuing sadly, “Things like towels, tents and others, are already gone!”

“We even threw away the salt!” Cao Lin added.

Luo Yuan’s face slightly darkened. Other equipment were not as important as salt, as it was needed to survive. It was a matter of life and death, as it was an ancient forest without any trace of human activities; it would be difficult to find even a pinch of salt here.

“For the time being, we can solve the problem by getting the iodine from the blood of mutated beasts. Besides, there should be some form of salt around here, if not, the creatures wouldn’t be able to survive. We can find rock-salt if we pay close attention to these mutated beasts,” said Commander Xia, while throwing some dried sticks of wood into the bonfire after a thought. “The issue of salt is temporarily solved. Also, about the issue of water, we should locate its source as soon as possible!”

Luo Yuan responded, “I have decided to stay here for a few days to identify the direction before we depart again!”

In fact, they did not have to stay for a few days just to get their bearings right, but nobody objected. Even Commander Xia muttered softly to himself, and was silent when he saw all the soldiers looking numb.

Losing the plane had also crushed their only hope of survival, as if they fell directly to hell from the heaven. Everyone was in despair and lost all motivation to keep going.

Then, with a light moan, Zhao Yali opened her eyes slowly, sat

up and asked, “Have we reached the Construction Area? Where are we?”

Luo Yuan was expressionless for a moment, and sighed, “When you fainted because of your evolution, our plane crashed. How do you feel right now?”

Zhao Yali was stunned, and sized up her surroundings as it took awhile for everything to sink in.

The brutal reality had dampened her spirits. But as she had walked through the apocalypse, she had experienced something far worse than this. Her mental strength had been groomed to not be as weak as a common woman. She just shook her head gloomily, “I’m alright, just having a bit of a headache!”

“Did you just say that I have evolved?” She suddenly responded and asked in surprise. As she was emotionally excited, she raised her voice a few notches higher.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan could feel like a wave had scanned or passed through his body. Thus, he looked towards the dark forest quickly, checked around in detail but to no avail. Seeing that Zhao Yali was still looking at him, he nodded.

Zhao Yali also looked at the rest, and saw that they nodded slightly with mixed expressions.

Only then she was convinced with what had happened. At that



moment, she felt an intense surprise in her heart, which swept away all the gloom and despair she had.

When the apocalypse began, her fiancé had died in vain, followed by her parents. Even her only and last companion, Lao Hang, was killed in front of her. The pain of losing her loved ones had broken her heart again and again, but she was still able to stay strong. It was already the best that she could do. Others might not be able to cope with such a painful experience any better than she could. These incidents had made her feel insecure, which turned her to a more reserved person eventually. In fact, these were the people who usually hungered for power, and thrived to survive.

The sudden rush of emotions had caused her tears to stream down her cheek slowly.

# Chapter 203: The First Night

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Zhao Yali quickly wiped her tears away and hung her head low to cover her flushed cheeks, intending to also avoid the judgemental stares from the rest.

“Do you have any superpowers now?” Cao Lin asked with curiosity and envy.

Feeling pressured from all the attention she was getting, Zhao Yali didn't want to raise her head. She looked at her hands, clenched her fists and quipped, “I'm not too sure, but I feel a little stronger now, and there are changes to my skin.”

“Hmm, your skin is so much smoother now, similar to Luo Yuan's,” said Wang Xianguang in shock, while grabbing onto Zhao Yali's hand.

Zhao Yali retracted her hand immediately; she was blushing.

Huo Dong and the rest sneakily glanced at Luo Yuan, wondering what his reaction would be. But alas, he had his best poker face on.

Looking at Zhao Yali's disappointment, Luo Yuan comforted her.

“This is what everyone experiences after the evolution. It is not about superpowers. Your improved strength and skin shows that your body will gradually transform, but it will take time.

Evolution is usually well-hidden. When you're looking for it, you will never find it. But when you're not looking for it, you would chance upon it unexpectedly. It happened to me as well; not everyone is able to discover their superpowers the very moment evolution takes place."

Zhao Yali felt a wave of relief.

Under the burning flames, the meat was roasted to a golden brown. Huo Dong and the rest got up and removed the mutated beast from the skewer, cut it up into more than 10 servings, placed them on leaves the size of hand-fans and served to everyone.

The roasted meat tasted bland as there was no salt, but its fragrance and tenderness made it a little more bearable.

While Luo Yuan was chewing his food, he was paying attention to his surroundings as the forest was at its most dangerous point at night. There were many predatory mutated beasts hunting for food at this time of the day. The impact caused by the falling aircraft had made all living creatures flee from their homes, but it has been a while since that happened. With the meaty fragrance emitting from the roast, it was certainly possible to lure predators closer.

In fact, there were pairs of devilish eyes with erratic glows surrounding them in the dark.

At one second, they could be spotted hiding behind the trees, the next second they were creeping onto the ground, some of them

even camouflaging themselves between the lush leaves. The pitch-black darkness enabled the creatures to easily approach the group.

Fortunately, the creatures were small in size, possibly due to the environmental conditions of their habitat.

The flatlands in the Jiangnan province were not home for plants, as creatures were not restricted to roam around with the given space. But this was previously a deep forest before the apocalypse – plants were dense and the trees were deeply rooted into the ground, forming a thick, unventilated green web. If one was less superior, it was impossible for him to survive in such an environment.

Although the creatures were small, they weren't necessarily weaker than their bigger counterparts. On the contrary, they were much stealthier and sneakier.

These creatures were usually fast and as swift as wind, and boasted high vigilance. They would disappear in a split of a second with just a slight movement, or in the presence of a bigger predator.

Before the apocalypse, the mountains were not damaged by flames like it was in Jiangnan. Because of that, the diversity of different species here was rich as they even had a proper food chain to boot! The competition was cruel and intense; those that survived had already possessed survival skills of its own.

Cao Lin noticed that the bonfire was diminishing. She stood up to

dial up the fire, causing the flames to spurt a few feet high. The mutated beasts who were hiding in the dark took a few steps back with fear and hesitation in their eyes.

This fear was carved deep in their DNAs. With recurring forest fires, the fear was passed down through generations. Although the mutated beasts were now much stronger, the fear still lived on.

Considering the fear of fire in these creatures eyes, Luo Yuan was relieved. If all the mutated beasts were to attack them together, he would not be able to not protect everyone in his presence.

“I think the military base would send us our death notice, right? Not sure how my mother would react to that,” said one soldier.

“At least you still have your mother; I don’t have anybody,” another soldier sighed.

“It has been a long time since I last went home. It was also one of the enemy zones, perhaps no one had survived there too,” said another soldier.

“At least we’re still alive. So many of our mates died without their bodies found... that’s devastating,” a soldier said with pain.

To avoid distress in the team, such topic was prohibited from popping up in conversations. As Commander Xia attempted to stop them; he couldn’t help but to let out a sigh.

Seemingly affected by the soldiers, Huang Jiahui eyes turned red as she thought of her family. She hugged Chen Jiayi, and thought of her daughter who should be around the same age in a few years time.

The immature Zhong Chuqiang and Deng Chao felt envious of Chen Jiayi, who was in Huang Jiahui's arms. They were quick to assume that Chen Jiayi was everyone's favorite.

As dusk descended, strong winds blew, and the howls of the wolves amplified throughout the night.

Finally, a mutated beast lost its patience and slowly approached them with light steps as the wind blew. It had slender and light bodies like that of a deer, but with muscular limbs. It walked in silence, with their shadows barely visible, camouflaging itself well in the darkness.

Even Luo Yuan did not notice its movements. Only until it was twenty meters away, had he been able to sense their approach.

The beast paused and unleashed its final attack. The muscles of its body was fluid like mercury, and the sudden stomp caused it to move as far as twenty meters in mere seconds. Its target was Zhong Chuqiang, who was conveniently standing right in the middle.

This was a predator's instinct, of carefully choosing those who could easily be tackled without getting themselves injured. Apart from those who were being carried, he was the weakest, making him an ideal victim.

From charging, stomping to landing, the entire attack took less than one second. Zhong Chuqiang felt a swift of wind behind his neck, and felt nothing else apart from goosebumps. He looked down, to see sharp teeth just about to sink into his neck.

Apart from Luo Yuan, nobody else noticed that this was happening.

He hit the ground hard and stood up unexpectedly. Jumping over the bonfire, Luo Yuan brandished the Zhanmadao from his waist.

The mutated beast opened its mouth filled with sharp teeth the second Luo Yuan stood up. The tip of the sword was stabbed through its chin to its upper jaw and eventually towards the back of its head. Its mouth was stuck onto the sword and it could not budge.

The mutated beast twitched for a little while, before its pupils slowly dilated.

It was only until this point that Zhong Chuqiang noticed what had just happened. He turned around and saw the mutated beast that Luo Yuan stabbed. Looking at the twitching mutated beast, he turned pale and sat on the floor.

Deng Chao who was just beside him was scared too, but his attention was on Luo Yuan, who he now exalted with high praise.



Luo Yuan retracted his sword, pulled out its skin and tossed it into the bonfire. “Please be careful everyone, this place isn’t safe.”

Everyone was scared and drenched with sweat, as they didn’t notice how near the mutated beasts were. Fortunately there was Luo Yuan, lest it could result in another loss of their teammates.

Since then, everyone was alert to every single movement. They kept checking the back from time to time. Although there was nothing most of the time, but that was able to scare off the low-level mutated beast who attempted to even get close.

The night descended, and when the first light began to illuminate the sky, the mutated beasts began to leave.

Apart from Luo Yuan, everyone else was exhausted as they were not well-rested at all throughout the night. It was even more tiring than a day’s worth of hard labor. It was not even time to rest yet. Everyone started to occupy themselves with cooking and collecting firewood, but they dare not stray off too far.

This forest had become extremely unpredictable and dangerous; there was nothing that they were familiar with during the apocalypse. Every step they took could be a trap. Before walking away from the forest, everyone had their pants camouflaged tight with leaves.

That of course, did not include Luo Yuan.

The forest smelled clear, albeit with a decaying scent in the morning dew.

There was a strange creature with gold stripes in the bushes, very attentive to its surroundings, extending its head from the cave. Its ears slightly flapped while listening to the noises around it. It flew up onto a branch of a tree, after making sure that it was the perfect time to move. It held the fresh buds of the leaves with its fluffy paws and gobbled them up quickly. Its speed was amazing, as within a few seconds, all the leaves on the branch were eaten up.

Noticing Luo Yuan getting close, the creature jumped a few times on the tree with its fur all standing up, hopped into the bushes and that was the last he saw of it.

Water vapor clouded the air, as it was located near the valley. While sniffing the moisture, Luo Yuan kept walking until he heard the sound of flowing water, from a few hundred meters away. There was a three meter-wide creek, with crystal clear water.

Amongst the fishes he spotted, there were quite a number species in the creek, with most of them about half a meter long.

This discovery had elevated Luo Yuan's mood. While he was planning to make a spear to catch some mutated fishes before heading back, he heard a scream from far away. It sounded like Zhao Yali. His heart pounded as he quickly made his way back. Everyone was gathered around with fear on their faces.

Luo Yuan's heart sank.

# Chapter 204: Infrasound

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Luo Yuan was soon relieved when he saw Zhao Yali well and fine amongst the rest. Apparently something happened to someone else out of his circle.

All of them quickly parted when they saw Luo Yuan returned; they were relieved upon seeing him.

Even a few soldiers reacted the same way as the rest. Luo Yuan had always been exalted, and regarded as a huge influence to the people around him.

Luo Yuan walked closer. There was a soldier lying on the ground, still twitching, but he was already dead. His skull had been cracked open, while his brain was all smashed to mush.

“What happened?” Luo Yuan asked with a heavy heart.

A soldier explained to him with grief. The victim needed to ease himself this morning, and was planning to conduct a number one in a corner. When he walked to the border of the forest, an unknown creature landed on his head. Before he could even attack the creature, it broke his skull open.

It was Zhao Yali who discovered the fallen soldier. When the rest rushed to the scene, the creature had already escaped.

Luo Yuan gazed towards the forest... danger doesn't seem to ever

end, does it? His heart sank, as yet another life was gone. This was only the first day of their arrival, and who knows? Incidents like this might happen again. No one would ever know who could be the next victim.

He subconsciously observed everyone, and he noticed that there was something wrong with Zhao Yali. She was trembling with fear and insecurity.

Luo Yuan sensed something amiss. She had seen so much gory scenes and dead people along the way, so she couldn't possibly be afraid of this one incident. Could she be hiding something?

Luo Yuan walked away from the crowd, beckoned Zhao Yali to follow him to an open space located a distance away.

Zhao Yali's expression changed. She hesitated before proceeding to follow him, with mixed feelings.

The both of them walked more than a hundred meters away and stopped. They figured that this would be far enough; nobody could possibly eavesdrop on their conversation.

Luo Yuan kept quiet. He hesitated for a while and asked, "What exactly happened? Are you hiding something from us?"

Zhao Yali burst into tears before she could say anything.

"Little Yuan..... I think I killed someone."

What Zhao Yali said hit Luo Yuan hard. He paused to think, and comforted her immediately.

“It’s okay, don’t worry. Tell me what happened.”

He knew Zhao Yali very well. She has no problem killing animals, but slaying people is something that she would never have the guts to do. Moreover, the soldier had nothing to do with her, why would she kill him for no good reason? There must be something that he doesn’t know about.

Zhao Yali narrated what happened, choking with tears.

What she said was similar to what the other soldier said. The victim walked too close to the forest, there was a fluffy, monkey-like mutated creature that landed on his head. Zhao Yali was collecting firewood in the area, when he heard the soldier’s yells of anguish. The moment she turned to look, she saw his skull being ripped open by the creature. She couldn’t help but to scream out loud upon witnessing the traumatic incident.

What she didn’t expect was how her scream formed an invisible force that hit both the mutated beast and the soldier. The soldier’s brain was smashed by the force as well.

The soldier was initially struggling to stay alive, but died instantly by the unexpected force of her voice.

After listening to Zhao Yali's explanation, Luo Yuan was relieved. Zhao Yali was not the one to blame. The soldier's skull had already been ripped open, he was already hovering on the brink of death. Even without Zhao Yali's innocent hit, he wouldn't have lived much longer. Furthermore, the mutated beast was still on his back, his life was already on the line.

Regardless of law or morality, Zhao Yali was not the one to be blamed.

Zhao Yali felt slightly better after being comforted by Luo Yuan, but the guilt was still inevitable.

If they were to look at this tragedy from a different perspective, this could be good news for Zhao Yali. The incident was very much like a transmission or baptism of sorts, for her. Nothing could change a person's character faster than murder could. Although this was cruel, but being in the apocalypse, only the strongest ones survive.

Much later, Luo Yuan was curious to find out more about Zhao Yali's superpower, so he asked her to attempt it again.

Zhao Yali hesitated, as she was obviously still traumatized from what happened. But after being convinced by Luo Yuan, coupled with her own curiosity towards her new superpower, she agreed to put it to the test.

Without any preparation beforehand, she screamed out loud.

It was nothing too different from her usual scream, but there was a unique force to it.

Luo Yuan felt the air being penetrated by an invisible force, and started to reverberate intensively in waves. It was quickly spread everywhere, causing the stones and fallen leaves to be hurled across the air after impacted by the force.

It was obviously infrasound, as her vocal cord was changed during the transformation. It was now capable of create such powerful waves with ease.

But the force was nothing compared to a five or six-tier typhoon, and its distance could only reach twenty meters away.

“Scream louder,” said Luo Yuan.

Simply knowing that she now possessed a superpower, Zhao Yali was exhilarated. She nodded and screamed again. This time she raised her voice an octave higher. The high-pitch scream penetrated through Luo Yuan’s ears, and caused his head to buzz. He felt a little nauseated and took a few steps back.

Meanwhile, the air in front of Zhao Yali vibrated as if it was boiling with intense shock. An invisible wave spread, and in a flash, the weeds were destroyed. The only thing left was the tougher sticks, and even the roots were crushed by the wave.

Luo Yuan was surprised, but he had his doubts.

Although the force seemed to be strong, but its lethality was rather limited. The force may not even be able to kill a Light Blue mutated beast.

“Could you go even higher?” asked Luo Yuan, who felt she was far from exceeding her limit.

Zhao Yali, very much in the moment, eagerly agreed to try again.

This time she mustered her strength a little longer with some deep breathing, and let out a scream after one deep breath.

Luo Yuan did not hear anything at all, but there seemed to be an explosion in the air. There was a brutal blow-up; a ring of white appeared in the near distance, that looked like very much like a missile explosion. The wave spread at the speed of light. All the rocks and bushes were critically hit, even the mossy boulders had a few layers shredded off, from the recurring waves.

With the continuous infrasound explosion, layers of humus on the ground were lifted. The sky was covered with flying leaves and gravels. It was quite a glorious scene to behold.

Zhao Yali stopped and blushed; she couldn't stop. Apparently, this feat had required a lot of strength. She looked up, her red lips slightly opened. She was shocked at the scene that she had caused.

Although Luo Yuan's power was much more impactful, Zhao



Yali's infrasound had the power to affect the forest faraway. Many creatures that were hiding in the forest thought there was a catastrophe about to befall upon them, so they fled the scene.

Even for Luo Yuan, his body could not take it. His heart was racing rapidly. He felt nauseous, and a numb sensation penetrated his scalp. He wasn't even standing where the force was aiming at! If he were to be attacked head-on, the impact would be much stronger, more than anyone could ever expect.

"Sister Yali, your superpower is amazing!" said Wang Xianguang in excitement. Her face was pale, it was clear that she was affected by the infrasound.

Due to the great impact, apart from the injured soldiers who stayed put, the rest ran over out of curiosity.

Zhao Yali was embarrassed, "I didn't know that the impact would be this monumental."

"Congratulations! You are certainly an amazing evolutionary," said Cao Lin, who didn't want to offend either party.

Huang Jiahui congratulated her as well, but with a forced smile, visibly upset that she was not the bearer of such a superpower.

Wang Shishi wasn't impressed and didn't say a word, but she felt massively pressured inside.

Lin Xiaoji was unhappy looking at the damage caused. As a senior evolved human, he was not fine with this at all, as his power was only slightly better than an ordinary person's. He kept everything bottled up and it was driving him crazy.

It was a solemn procession, as they watched the cremation of the dead bodies, including the two pilots.

After the cremation was over, the soldiers wrapped the ashes with the beast's skin and buried them together with their personal belongings.

There was no grave nor tombstone; the handling of the dead was minimal. Perhaps it wasn't as bad as it sounded at all, considering that many fallen soldiers had been left in the wild to be eaten by mutated beasts.

When noon approached, the giant lizard was eager to come out. The aircraft was deformed, and the door could not be opened. In order to let the giant lizard out, Luo Yuan had to cut open the back of the aircraft.

After a good night's rest, the giant lizard was still tired and spaced out from time to time. Luo Yuan was helpless, as evidently, the anesthetic had a strong effect. Nobody would know when the giant lizard was able to fully regain its energy again.

But since it was able to stand up, it could still be used for labour purposes.

The most dangerous time to be in the forest was at nightfall. The fear that they had to go through in the wild last night was traumatic. It was impossible to live like that any longer, even if their bodies were made of steel.

Therefore, a safe refuge was essential to their survival.

The aircraft was supposed to be the best option they had as it was spacious and sturdy, even a normal mutated beast could not destroy it. But ever since the tragic collision, there were many cracks the size of two meters in diameter. Furthermore, the back of the aircraft had already been cut open to allow the giant lizard to come out. It was definitely not a place safe enough for them to hide in, especially with such treacherous circumstances.

Luo Yuan initially wanted to dig a cave big enough for more than 10 people, but the effort and work required for this was rather major; it could possibly take a long time to accomplish. But with the help of the giant lizard, this task would be much easier.

After discussing with the rest, Luo Yuan realised that he missed out some facts. Such a cave was not very safe, as this was a virgin forest with corruptions as deep as three to four, or even five to six meters. If they didn't dig all the way to the claypan, it would collapse easily. Moreover, there was no preventive measure to this; all they could depend on was their instinct.

They soon conjured a better idea.

The head of the aircraft was supposed to crash onto the mountain

slope. As long as they dug another five to six meters into the head, it should be able to accommodate everyone.

The cockpit was five to six meters higher than the cabin anyway. If someone were to come in, they would have to pass through a metal staircase. Also, there was a door outside the cockpit.

What came to everyone's surprise was how the door was not damaged from the hit, and could still be locked.

"That's great! Now there won't be any creatures sneaking into the cave!" yelled Huo Dong with excitement.

"The only downside is that the task is major, but considering the fact that we will be able to sleep peacefully tonight, it would be well worth it," laughed Commander Xia.

Everyone was revelling in delight. They were finally relieved from their oppression and distress.

There was nothing more important than safety, on a dooms day such as this one.

# Chapter 205: Apocalypse

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It was 10:30 in the morning, seven to eight hours before the sky turned dark.

Their hours were numbered, even Huang Jiahui and the other ladies who were cooking had put down what they were doing to help carry the gravel.

The cockpit's windshield was broken while the inside was blocked by a great amount of soil. To get through the round aircraft's head, the only option they had was to clear a path among the gravel in the cockpit, and dig from the inside.

Luo Yuan was standing in front, and he used his sharp Zhanmadao to slice through humongous rocks that weighed tonnes, into smaller pieces weighing hundreds of kilos each. The rest quickly helped to move the rocks away.

With Wang Shishi's capability equivalent to that of six people, she was the most efficient one. She used her telekinesis to levitate pieces of gravel and soil, forming a river on top of their heads. They went through the metal door and into the cabin, one by one.

Her telekinesis was improving at breakneck speed. Since the bridge explosion, she was getting used to the impact and now, her telekinesis could carry things that weighed fifty kilos. Sooner or later, she would be able to fly.

It had been an hour since the clearing of gravel, and the cabin

was soon cleaned up. All that was left was an elongated rock that had pierced through the windshield. It was a humongous rock extending from the windshield to the floor, which damaged the panels and chairs, as well as leaving the metal floor deformed.

The tricky thing was that it acted as a barricade to the head of the aircraft. So it must be removed, by hook or by crook. Luo Yuan was afraid the aircraft would collapse, but now that all rocks were cleared away, it was time to get rid of this particular piece of rock.

Luo Yuan touched the rock and found out that the smaller rocks surrounding it were compact from the compression after the critical hit. They had formed a new balance, preventing any more rocks from falling from above. Collapsing was definitely not possible now.

“Everyone, stay away from here!” said Luo Yuan.

“Please be careful,” said a worried Huang Jiahui.

Luo Yuan nodded. Once everyone was out of the cockpit, he stared at the rock, took a deep breath and sliced it with his Zhanmadao seven to eight times. He left the cockpit right after that. His speed was astonishing – from slicing, sheathing to leaving the cockpit, it only took him no more than half a second.

A loud noise came from the aircraft after Luo Yuan left and stood outside the door. As loud as thunder, the sliced rock fell onto the metal floor and another loud noise was heard. The chairs in the cockpit were hit by the rolling rocks. Thankfully, there was no

casualties as everyone had evacuated the area.

Apart from the humongous rocks, there were no other gravel that fell. The cut left a smooth surface. Although they were tiny cracks at the edges, but the middle was flat, so no more stones were able to be removed.

Without the hindrance of the rock, Luo Yuan managed to empty the aircraft's head. Even the smallest parts in the head were sliced using the Zhanmadao. Commander Xia's face twitched as he watched from the sidelines.

This was the most advanced aircraft, possibly worth billions before the end of the world. But even without being destroyed by Luo Yuan, many parts of the aircraft were already damaged, as the head was hit and compressed like a biscuit, with malformed internal parts.

Especially at the top of the head, it was completely dented to a concave shape. The head was soon chopped off by Luo Yuan using his Zhanmadao in a circular motion. The metal dropped onto the floor with a loud thud, revealing a man-sized cave.

Although it wasn't the first time this slicing took place, but everyone, especially a few soldiers, were still amazed by how sharp the Zhanmadao was. The rocks in the cave were crushed by the impact on the aircraft's head. With a slight touch, the crushed stones disintegrated into powder. It was as fine as flour, and sprinkled across the cave. It didn't even need any more digging. With Wang Shishi's telekinesis, the powder formed into a giant white dragon and was sent outside.

With the removal of the crushed stones, they had more space to work with. Gravel could only be found three to four meters away. Wang Shishi's telekinesis was partially used up. Less than half an hour later, it was depleted and she had to stop. But the job she had done was similar to what everyone else had accomplished collectively, as most of the crushed stones were moved by Wang Shishi. What she did even earned her a compliment from Luo Yuan, which was quite rare.

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Being in this risky environment, no doubt it was extremely dangerous for them to be moving the rocks inside as they could be buried by the gravel. But the people here were anything but ordinary. Even for ordinary people, their body should be around 12 points. But their strength, reaction and speed was twice as strong as those of ordinary people. It will be equivalent if these people were to join any athletics competition, as they would definitely break the record. Even for Wang Shishi who seemed weak, without telekinesis, she was able to run with ease with a hundred kilos of rocks in her hands. If they were to be placed in the apocalypse, many would be shocked by their abilities. But as compared to Luo Yuan, these people seemed to be mere weaklings.

There were several collapses along the way but they managed to avoid being buried. The most dangerous incident was when more than ten pieces of gravel that weighed approximately hundreds of tons, fell towards their head. Luo Yuan warned them, and they managed to run away before the gravel even landed on them. Nobody was hurt, except for one who was hit on the head but it was merely a scrape; no bandage was needed.



As they were digging seven to eight meters deep, the gravel were nowhere to be seen but there were many, many gigantic rocks. For safety purposes, Luo Yuan dugged a few meters in until he reached a rock wall.

The task progressed faster than expected, as nobody took a break from working. Before 7pm, they were already wrapping up. The cave was now approximately ten meters deep and six meters wide. Although it was narrow, it was good enough to hide in a safe place that could fit all of them during the apocalypse.

Looking at the cave surrounded by walls, everyone was relieved as they could finally sleep in peace that night.

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As they walked outside, it was completely dark. It was rather windy that night; the wind swept through the woods, creating an eerie whistling sound. Everyone was preparing to make dinner.

“Would you guys look at the sky now?” suggested Huo Dong, out of nowhere.

Everyone quickly looked up, to be greeted by an aurora above their heads. It was resembled an ever-changing ribbon, giving the sky a bizarre yet alluring vibe. What caused their scalp to feel numb was the aurora that almost blanketed the entire sky.

“Why would this thing appear at a place like this?” Cao Lin was shocked. “Maybe an earthquake is coming!”

No, that is impossible, maybe this is just a coincidence,” Wang Xianguang said, while looking at the beautiful aurora with a trembling voice.

Luo Yuan didn't say anything, as he knew that an aurora wasn't a good indication of anything. This was only caused by the earth's magnetic layer or the high-energy particle flow from the milky way triggering the ionization of the molecules. He had seen it before at the volcano; it was obviously a magnetic field change the last time too.

But it was different this time round. Before the plane crashed, he had witnessed a majestic aurora, but it was much smaller and it did not cover as much of the sky as this one did. This could be the storm of the universe that Commander Xia was talking about.

Luo Yuan looked at Commander Xia. He didn't look so good and his lips were quivering. Clearly, they shared the same thought.

The wind was blowing more and more intensely, causing them to falter in their stance. The green carpet above the forest was shaking too, emitting an unusual rustling noise. Luckily the tree branches here were tough, or else they would have been uprooted by now.

The strength of the wind had the same magnitude as an eighth to ninth-tier typhoon. For this to be happening in such an inland

area, it was definitely something really odd.

The aurora was spreading further at high speed, almost engulfing the entire sky. Lightning had even struck, occasionally followed by thunders. As time passed, the unusual atmosphere slowly dominated the night.

The atmosphere was intense, causing goosebumps and fear unbeknownst to all. Later on, there was an uproar in the forest, causing many creatures to scurry about aimlessly in the dark. An unknown creature that was three-meters long ran towards Luo Yuan. Consumed by fear, it had lost its mind. It eventually crashed into a tree and lost consciousness.

Within ten minutes, the lightning was striking more frequently, as if forming an electrical web in the sky. For a second, the sky was illuminated, as bright as day.

A shiver ran down Luo Yuan's spine. He pulled Commander Xia aside and asked, "If this is really the storm of the universe, how bad would it potentially be?"

Commander Xia's face turned pale. He thought about it for a little while and said, "I'm not too sure either, but first the ionosphere would expand, and the dissipation of the outer space's atmosphere would accelerate. The atmospheric layer was discharging at a large-scale, and the earth's temperature will rise subsequently, which is what we are now experiencing.

"If it gets even worse, the atmospheric would be later destroyed

by the storm, forming a hole. Anything would be inevitable after that, should the hole get bigger. All the living beings would cease to exist. The only way to survive is to hide underground in a condition that provides a complete ecosystem.”

“So do you mean the only thing we can do now is to pray for the storm to pass as soon as possible?” Huo Dong asked in desperation.

Boom!

A huge lightning struck a hundred-meter tall tree from approximately a hundred meters away. The tree was sliced into half and started bursting into flames.

The lightning gave everyone a fright.

“Quick, we have to leave,” Luo Yuan shouted with three kids in tow, while he ran towards the aircraft. They were all scared and followed Luo Yuan, as they ran for their lives.

# Chapter 206: The Chase

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Thunder and lightning filled the sky, resembling silver snakes dancing with glaring white light. Deafening loud noises travelled as far as towards the hills across the horizon. All creatures, no matter how powerful they were, seemed to be as insignificant as a tiny speck in a catastrophe as such.

The giant lizard was restless; it was spinning on the ground and roaring from time to time. Suddenly, a lightning struck the nearby forest, causing an earth-shattering thud and a white beam of light that glared into everyone's eyes. Looking at this horrific phenomenon, the giant lizards took a few steps back. The scales on its tail stood up, and it let out a few angry roars before running towards the forest helter-skelter. Its eyes were bloodshot; it had completely lost its mind from all the fear.

Luo Yuan saw what happened and shouted, "Go in quickly, I'll go after it". Due to the effect of the anesthesia, the giant lizard was still weak and was not at the top of its game. As such, running into the forest in such a condition was a bad idea. The team could not afford to lose it as it was their main weapon. Furthermore, without the giant lizard as their mode of transport, it was impossible to leave this forest in a short period of time.

So by hook or by crook, he had to get hold of the giant lizard. He put the kids down and went after the giant lizard with his sword.

"Luo Yuan, no! Don't go, please come back!" Huang Jiahui shouted repetitively.

“Please be quick!” shouted Zhao Yali and Wang Shishi with all their might. They were worried sick.

Luo Yuan disregarded their pleas and ran forty to fifty meters into the forest within seconds. Not long after, he disappeared into the forest with the giant lizard.

“Sister Huang, it’s too dangerous here, let’s go in. With Boss Luo’s ability, he should be back really soon,” said Huo Dong, glancing at the terrifying lightning.

“This brother is right, the lightning is getting more and more vicious. We should get going before it strikes us,” hurried Commander Xia.

Huang Jiahui took a deep breath, suppressed her anxiety and nodded obediently. She quickly ran towards the aircraft while carrying Chen Jiayi, while Huo Dong and Commander Xia carried Deng Chao and Zhong Chuqiang respectively.

Everyone arrived in the cave safely; they could finally feel a slight relief. Listening to the thunderstorm outside, they were glad that they managed to dig out this cave or else they would have been stuck outside praying for the lightning to spare their lives.

As time passed, Luo Yuan still had not returned. The atmosphere was tense once again. Not only Huang Jiahui and the ladies were jittery, the rest were getting anxious as well. They naturally did not feel an ounce of fear when Luo Yuan was around, but when he was absent, everyone was shrouded in constant fear. Especially

being in a dark cave, it seemed to pose more threats than anyone could imagine.

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Luo Yuan ran fast, as he brushed through the trees in the forest. It was chaotic, with creatures bashing around aimlessly, and the birds and the bugs were flying haphazardly towards the sky. Some of them had been struck by lightning and burnt to ashes.

Luo Yuan tried catching up with the giant lizard running ahead of him. He was furious! It felt like the giant lizard had fallen to a powerful aphrodisiac; its body was weak but nothing was stopping it from running erratically. Obviously it was running out of fear, and it would not stop until it arrived a point of exhaustion.

The lightning was getting more and more intense, imminent of a heavy downpour. He was getting worried as the lightning had struck again with a sharp, glaring light. The most dangerous one was just ten meters away from him. The strong static electricity gave him goosebumps; it even felt like his hair was burnt, after experiencing a stinging sensation.

Compared to lightning speed, his +14 Agility was similar to that of ordinary people, and his response was not fast enough. Running in the forest was as if he was dancing with the devil. His heart was pounding, and he was at the edge of giving up, but he decided to bite the bullet and gave it all that he had.

“Damn it!” cursed Luo Yuan, while chasing after the giant lizard.

He stepped hard onto a branch on the ground and bounced up like a bullet. He repeated the trick with the help of vines to bounce across the forest. It was not too hard to achieve that as the leaves were dense. There was almost no gap between them as the vines were intertwined everywhere. He did not have to worry about not being able to find a spot to land on.

The terrain was complicated, and the roads were rugged and slippery. He had to be extra careful with every step he took. He was not used to it at first, so he was very much behind the giant lizard. But with the help of the trees and vines, his speed was accelerating as he familiarized himself with the terrain.

After chasing for almost half an hour, Luo Yuan finally had a glimmer of hope.

He grabbed onto a vine and swung himself into the air with the help of momentum. As he reached the highest point, he let go of the vine and landed onto the giant lizard's back. The strong force caused the giant lizard to stagger. It ran clumsily for a while, before slipping and falling into a muddy swamp.

The giant lizard struggled to get up, and attempted to continue running. Luo Yuan punched its head with all his rage. With that willful punch, the giant lizard fell onto the ground again. The thought of risking his life from getting struck by lightning, as well as the chase that lasted for half an hour, angered Luo Yuan. He gave it a few kicks to release his temper.

The giant lizard moaned in pain and could not get up. Luo Yuan's Will had a slight elevation a few days back, and the effect was no



longer the one he had back in the days where it was only capable of causing dizziness. His punch nearly knocked the giant lizard out. It slowly struggled to stand back on its feet after a minute.

When it had finally regained its senses, its fear had subsided. However, it still had a sense of insecurity which might translate into madness again. Luo Yuan felt much better after the punishment that he gave. He extended his hand, and the giant lizard bowed its head and came closer to him. It learnt how to do that from its extensive training. He gave it a pat on its head, before jumping onto its back, preparing for his return.

The half an hour chase was almost thirty to forty kilometers; it was akin to running around the hills twice. He had no idea where he was, but at least he wasn't completely lost, as the giant lizard's deep footsteps allowed him to trace its steps from where they came from.

The giant lizard took a few steps, collapsed onto the ground and could not move anymore. It was already weak before that, and the chase had depleted all its energy. Now that it had lost its hysterical strength, its body collapsed. Luo Yuan frowned. He could not leave the giant lizard alone, but it was too dangerous for it to stay in the forest. Now that the storm of the universe and the atmospheric ionization was getting more and more intense, he might get struck by lightning if he was unlucky. Despite his good physique, there was no escaping that.

Suddenly, he recalled that there were some attributes remaining for the giant lizard. Every time when its attributes increased, it was accompanied with recovery and healing effects. Earlier, he was

worried that once the giant lizard became stronger, it would not be easily tamed. He also feared that its Loyalty would decrease, or that this could even lead to betrayal. That was why he held onto the point. But considering the dire situation he was in now, he could not care less. Looking at its high level of loyalty, the chances of it betraying Luo Yuan should be slim! Moreover, its Strength was so much further ahead than it was before, and even if it had the thought of betraying him, it could use brute strength to suppress it.

After weighing the pros and cons in his mind, he did not think much of it anymore. He opened the attribution panel and added points to its Agility.

# Chapter 207: Restless Night

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When Luo Yuan clicked on the panel, there was a mild tremble in the giant lizard's body. Its eyes were sparkling, and the wounds on its body were instantly healed. Its scales were shiny, and even its body size had transformed slightly.

That did not last too long. Within 10 seconds, the transformation had ended. It seemed to feel the transformation, as it shook its body and stood up. The fear in its eyes dissipated, overwhelmed by excitement and joy.

Luo Yuan kept looking at the attribution panel. The giant lizard's current attribution was:

“Fighting beast: Forest lizard”

“Level: Dark Blue”

“Attributes: -”

“Power: 20”

“Agility: 16”

“Physique: 18”

“Intelligence: 4”

“Perception: 5”

“Will: 12”

“Experience: 1620/9600”

“Skills: Biting: 3; Tearing: 12; Striking: 8; Tail strike: 2; Survival skill: 18; Observation: 5; Breathing: 7”

“Natural ability: Sense of danger, fire breathing”

“Status: Healthy”

“Loyalty: 80 (Risk of betrayal if value is less than 50; full value 100)”

“Unassigned attribute points: 0”

“Unallocated technique: 5”

Luo Yuan was relieved, as its Loyalty did not drop too much. It was 87 initially. Such loyalty was considered high when most of the time it was only hovering above 70. With its current condition after going through so much, from experiencing weakness to being healed, it seemed like the effect of the anesthesia was almost wearing off.

The other skills had also improved during that period of time, where each of them had gained two to three points, especially for biting. As long as there was an increase in their attributes, the remaining five skills did not matter as much.

The Strength of the giant lizard was now terrifying. Although it was still at a dark blue level, its attributes were comparable to those of the light green ones. Diving into details, Lao Huang who passed away was in a normal unit, while the giant lizard was in an elite unit, and is now considered to be in a hero unit. It could now take on an ordinary light green level one-on-one in a battle.

Luo Yuan hopped onto the giant lizard, and looked up to the sky before he left. The sky was filled with an unusual phenomenon, with the lightning and aurora coming together, painting a clear picture of the apocalypse. There was a pungent ozone smell in the air, and what dumbfounded them even more was a typhoon about ten kilometers in radius whirling through the sky. Numerous flashes of lightning were surrounding the typhoon, as it started to spread rapidly.

He had never experienced anything as terrifying as this. What was happening was more petrifying than all the lightnings he had seen in his life, combined. The horrific scene gave him cold feet and hands, and his head was buzzing. The giant lizard ran faster and faster aimlessly; its gigantic body kept crashing into trees and shrubs. Luo Yuan who was sitting on its back could feel its body trembling. Fortunately, Luo Yuan was guiding its way and comforting it from time to time, or else it would have lost its way.

With the lightning striking into the forest, fires broke out and smoke was billowing everywhere. The unsettling storm had made all the branches stack up into a hyper-dense forest. Fire was inevitable before the apocalypse, and once it started burning, many mountains would be burnt to ashes if it was not extinguished immediately.

Fortunately, the forest fire didn't seem so serious. The burning only lasted for a little while before it disappeared, and the smoke was cleared soon after.

In the apocalypse, not only animals go through evolution, but plants do as well. Facing a life-threatening fire like this, the plants had their own defense mechanism. Although they could not move, their response when put under stress was quick. When Luo Yuan passed by a plant which was struck by lightning, he noticed that it was releasing a milky-white substance to protect itself. Within a short period of time, the fire was put out and was prevented from spreading.

Along the way, Luo Yuan was afraid that he would get struck by lightning, but fortunately, he was safe. It took him approximately 10 minutes to arrive the cave. Luo Yuan hopped off the giant lizard and started running. He stopped, turned around to look at the giant lizard. He was worried that it would go crazy again out of fear.

What he did not expect was when the giant lizard was scratching the ground, its claws which were as thick as a giant excavator dug out soil weighing several tonnes. In a blink of eye, it had dug a deep hole. It did not stop the giant lizard from digging even more.

Five minutes later, the hole turned into a ten meter deep pit.

It then laid into the pit, gathered the soil around it and swept them into the pit with its tail. It buried itself in the pit, he stayed there without moving a muscle.

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There was not much light in the cave. Although there was lightning outside, none of the light penetrated through the cave. Everyone was relieved when they saw him walking into the cave.

“What is happening outside?” asked Commander Xia, in his husky voice.

“The thunderstorm was getting intense but thankfully, no fire had broken out in the forest yet,” Luo Yuan paused and said calmly. Huang Jiahui sat by his side.

Everyone kept quiet, there was fear permeating the atmosphere.

Huang Jiahui held Luo Yuan tightly while slightly shivering; Luo Yuan patted her hands in consolation. Wang Shishi too sat by his side, held his the other arm tightly and asked,” Brother Luo, will we die?”

“Are you afraid of death?” Luo Yuan asked. Wang Shishi shook her head hard, and looked at Luo Yuan passionately. All her worries had gone away. “Sometimes I am afraid, and sometimes

I'm not... but I don't feel afraid whenever I'm with you," she said.

Huang Jiahui would be jealous if she heard that in the past, but at that very moment of life and death, all she did was to heave a sigh. Luo Yuan forced a smile and said, "Don't worry, things are not as bad as it seems... it will soon be over. You need to know that the earth rotates every day, and as long as we get through the day, the storm of the universe would disappear from our part of the world."

Of course, those words were only to comfort Wang Shishi. Anyone with an inkling of astronomical knowledge would know that no matter where one was in the world, should the storm of the universe destroy the atmospheric layer, the high energy laser would scorch the earth. No living thing can even escape that.

As time passed, the thunderstorm outside did not seem to stop, but was getting more and more intense! The lightning would occasionally strike near the cave, causing them to feel the quake. There were even gravel falling from time to time. Everyone was terrified and prayed for safety, in their hearts.

"Does anyone want a cigarette?" Commander Xia asked, with a slight shiver. He did not look so good, and it seemed like he was trying to suppress something. Some of the guys accepted the offer but Luo Yuan rejected. Commander Xia crumpled the empty cigarette box, and lighted up his cigarette with a lighter, still trembling. He took a deep puff and asked in his husky voice, "Brother Luo was asking if we were afraid of death, am I correct? Do you what the conditions were like during our first mission? We didn't fight for decades, nor did we have an idea of how cruel a war could be. No matter how good the training was, we were still



newbies in this. I still remember our first mission – it was open burning. It was only the beginning of the apocalypse, and the entire crew was on the move. We took a ride on the truck through the hills, with the sole mission of burning the entire mountain. We were there as mobs, while I was still a deputy commander.”

“Once the hill was on fire, countless mutated beasts fled all at once... I still have vivid memories of that scene. Do you know how many of us died? Almost half of the team did, and most of them were shot by military judges. I did not open fire at all. I was just lying on the trenches, shaking. I was afraid, my body was weak and I couldn’t stand up to escape. It was a near-death experience.”

“I was in shock; I turned in my retirement report once I got back. The commander at that time tore my report and warned me that it should be the last time I attempted that, or else I would be treated as a fugitive who deserts his people. The punishment for deserters was a bullet in the head. He did not lie. Not long after, there was a bunch of people who were given the death sentence, followed by a major purge.”

“It was the first time, but there will be second and third time... The commander perished, and so did the deputy commander. Soon, it was my turn to take their place as commander. Almost every month, we had a large number of recruits joining, some of them couldn’t even hold the rifle properly at their first battlefield. A few months later, there were not many veterans left.”

“I was lucky that I survived. In my team, the members younger than 50 could live longer than I do. Technically, a veteran like me should not fear anything anymore, because it was considered a

blessing that I'm still alive today. But still, I am still afraid whenever I enter a mission, as my wife and daughter are waiting for me. I'm worried that I will never see them again..." as Commander Xia went on, his voice choked up. He took a deep breath and looked towards to the sky without uttering a single word.

Some of the soldiers' eyes were wet, and they started sobbing quietly.

Luo Yuan heaved a long sigh.

# Chapter 208: Learning to Fight

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The next morning, Luo Yuan and the rest walked out of the cave.

The giant lizard had already gotten out of the pit by digging itself out, and was now sleeping near the aircraft.

The thunderstorm was gone, and so was the aurora. The sky was as clear as polished jade, and everything was quiet. There were damaged trees and burned spots on the ground. Obviously, the thunderstorm had not been an illusion.

Everyone was exhausted from all the tension over the past two nights. Their eyes were bloodshot, yet they seemed exhilarated. Their fatigue was almost completely gone. In fact, the lightning had started scattering away around midnight, and had completely disappeared by 3 a.m. No one could fall asleep until they saw it with their own eyes. They all felt relieved. They had not eaten or drunk anything in a whole day. Everyone except Luo Yuan realized how tired and hungry they were after such a busy day.

They had not been hunting the past two days. Their only food source had been the giant snake's internal organs, and nothing was left of those anymore. There were quite a lot of dead mutated beasts nearby. Some of them had died by crashing around aimlessly, and some had been scared to death. All of them had died miserably, but surprisingly, very few had been struck by lightning.

Luo Yuan took a stroll and brought back two low-level mutated beasts. A few women hastily prepared the food despite their

exhaustion, and they all gorged themselves, not minding how hot it was. They even finished the soup. After the meal, Luo Yuan urged everyone to go to sleep while he cleaned up the place.

No one had as strong a physique as Luo Yuan. Ever since he had activated the energy inside his heart, he was always energetic. He could go four days without sleep and still not look tired at all.

Luo Yuan brought the stone bowls to the creek and washed them, before strolling back to the cave. In the aftermath of the thunderstorm, the forest was quiet. The usual chirps of birds and insects were no longer to be heard. Luo Yuan sighed and jumped on top of the worn-out aircraft. He stabbed his sword into the metal, took a seat and stared at the sky. Worry was flooding his heart.

He did not know whether the peace had been caused by the movement of the Earth, or if the universe storm had indeed ended. The Earth was too small in comparison to the universe, and any living thing on the planet was like a tiny ant. He had noticed that the thunderstorm had caused strange changes in the weather. It was morning, and yet the temperature was already 30 degrees. That kind of temperature was typical for noon, but the sun had not even risen yet. By noon, when the sun would be high up in the sky, the temperature would rise to more than 50 degrees.

The stir caused by the universe storm had produced a massive energy, and as a result the temperature had skyrocketed. The thunderstorm the previous night had happened in a really short time, which had had an even bigger impact on temperature.

Luo Yuan dared not imagine what this change in temperature could bring. Would the icebergs melt? Would the sea-level rise? Would large amounts of land disappear? Of course, this issue would not affect any mutated animals, plants, or even humans. Although humans after the apocalypse were not comparable to mutated beasts, their physique was stronger than it used to be, so the higher temperature would still be tolerable for them.

What they had to be worried about was that, according to the study of the rehabilitation area, the universe storm had been caused by the mutation of living organisms. As a result, the massive energy that had been released could speed up evolution and worsen the living conditions for humans.

Luo Yuan felt depressed. He sat there until noon, when Huo Dong walked out of the aircraft and snapped him out of it. The top of the aircraft was terribly hot, and the air was so steamy, that one could possibly fry an egg on the metal. Only then did Luo Yuan realize that his butt had been burning. He stood up immediately. He could feel the burn for awhile, but the pain was gone almost instantly.

“Oh my god, the weather is so hot,” complained Huo Dong, who was soaking in sweat. He squinted at the sun and noticed Luo Yuan hopping off the top of the aircraft. “Boss Luo, what were you doing up there? Isn’t it hot?” he teased.

“Why didn't you sleep some more?” Luo Yuan asked, ignoring Huo Dong’s teasing.

“It’s too hot in there. I felt like I was in a steamer. If I slept any more, I would probably end up getting boiled. I didn't expect it to

be even hotter outside. This is ridiculous,” said Huo Dong while he fanned himself with his hands. It was useless. He would not stop sweating, so he quickly hid under the shade of the aircraft.

The ventilation in the cave was bad, and the space was limited. It was okay in the beginning, because there were thick rocks covering the cave, but once the heat was transferred to the rocks, the temperature inside started rising gradually. Soon, everyone got out one by one, woken up by the unbearable heat.

“The temperature was okay yesterday. Why is it so hot now? None of us could sleep,” complained Wang Shishi with a yawn. Her eyes looked bloodshot.

“I think the temperature in the cave is over 60 degrees,” said Commander Xia. His expression was solemn as he observed the unusual weather. The gigantic aircraft was almost as tall as a four-floor building. Everyone sat under its shade to avoid getting burned by the scorching sun.

There had to be some kind of explanation about this. Most of them thought it had something to do with the thunderstorm the previous night, but none of them wanted to bring up that heavy topic.

Luo Yuan did not join in the conversation. He was just cleaning his Zhanmadao quietly. His anxiety was gone. Deng Chao peeked at Luo Yuan from time to time. His eyes held a burning desire, and his unbelievable power and astonishing sword skill were jaw-dropping. Luo Yuan was like a god to them.

Deng Chao had experienced many things in his life. He had seen the ugliness of people during the apocalypse, and how the strong ruled over the weak. He remembered his mother's sacrifices-how she had been raped by a couple of guys just for a few pieces of molded bread. Eventually, she had died of hemorrhage. All these dark experiences had made Deng Chao grow up fast.

Without his mother, he'd had to suck up to other adults in order to survive. Although he'd had to do degrading things, it had not bothered him. The more he had to do though, the more desperate he got for power. His desire was almost sickening. It was a dream he was trying to realize. It still remained a dream, though.

As he watched Luo Yuan clean his sword, Deng Chao had something on his mind. He'd had that same thought countless times, but he had not had the courage to do anything about it. He struggled internally before he finally stood up. Biting the bullet, he walked up to Luo Yuan, trembling. He tried his best to form a pleasant smile on his young face, but his skinny body was still shaking. Mustering his courage, he said, "Boss Luo, please teach me how to fight!"

## Chapter 209: The Three Stages

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Luo Yuan put his sword away, looked at Deng Chao and smiled. “You want to learn how to fight?”

He was as strong as a light green mutated beast by now. As much as he did not mean for things to be like that, ordinary people still felt pressured in his presence. Even Huo Dong and the other adults felt that way, let alone Deng Chao, who was just a kid.

Sweat kept dripping down Deng Chao’s forehead. In a few seconds, he was as wet as if he’d been under the rain. He tried his best to force a stiff smile although his mind was completely blank. He gulped and shook all over as he said, “Yes, that’s right. I want you to be my master!”

“Say it louder, I can’t hear you!” said Luo Yuan, shaking his head.

“I... I want you to be my master!” said Deng Chao. He was so frightened of Luo Yuan that he took a few steps back.

“I still can’t hear you!” Luo Yuan smiled.

Wang Xianguang could not stand the sight of poor Deng Chao, so she reminded him, “How can you learn to fight when you don’t even have the courage to speak up?”

With Wang Xianguang’s blessing, Deng Chao shouted, “I want you to be my master! I want to be stronger! I want to survive!”



“I want you to be my master, too!” shy Zhong Chuqiang said loudly, standing up too.

Chen Jiayi wanted to do the same, but before she could stand up, Luo Yuan said, “There’s no need for that. If you guys really want to learn, then you’ll have to put in all your effort to learn as much as you can. Everybody should learn how to use a sword. I will spend some time every day trying to teach all of you”.

Given the unusual temperature that day, animal and plant evolution would definitely speed up. The situation would only get more and more dangerous. If they did not know how to defend themselves, most of them would not be able to survive long. Learning how to use a sword would not show immediate results, but at least it would give them a chance to defend themselves.

Huo Dong looked excited. Ever since his departure from Hedong City, his journey had been a tough one. The lack of spare time had forced Boss Luo to stop his sword training. Although Huo Dong still practiced whenever he had the time, no matter how hard he tried, the result was just not the same. He had not expected Boss Luo to offer to teach them now.

Everybody else was excited too. Huang Jiahui suggested, “Since we have nothing to do now, we might as well start training!”

“That’s a great idea!” Luo Yuan said. He’d had the same thought as well. “A well-trained person can handle two to five people attacking them at the same time. Regardless of reaction time, our

strength and intuition are way ahead of ordinary people's."

"If you guys put in more effort, you could achieve in three months what others would need one year of training to accomplish. It is not hard to do. However, this is only the basics. What I want is for you to train your muscles to unleash the most strength possible. Huo Dong, take off your shirt and demonstrate for us briefly!" said Luo Yuan.

Huo Dong stood up in excitement and took off the top part of his heavy armor. His beer belly and fat had disappeared a long time ago. He now had some nice-looking abs instead. He took a deep breath, and once he had calmed himself down, he pointed his sword in the air and swung it around fast. There was a series of whooshing sounds before Huo Dong retracted his sword and put it away.

Lin Xiaoji could not help but chuckle. The way Huo Dong had retracted his sword was exactly like Luo Yuan. Even though he had tried to imitate him, Luo Yuan was as smooth as flowing water while Huo Dong had been clumsy as hell. It had been painful to watch him. Lin Xiaoji's chuckle made everyone laugh out loud. Some of the soldiers looked confused while Huo Dong blushed with hatred for Lin Xiaoji.

"That's enough!" Luo Yuan stood up and started walking while he removed his bullet-proof suit. He took off his shirt as well, revealing his upper body. His skin was as smooth as jade, his strong muscles swaying with the movement of his arms. His skin was like mercury, an impeccable image of strength and beauty.

Zhao Yali and the rest of the women mumbled to themselves, blushing while they secretly checked him out. Even some of the guys found Luo Yuan's body attractive. Luo Yuan walked up to Huo Dong and said, "Everyone please look carefully. The first time I swing my sword, I'm going to be very slow. The second time, I will swing my sword to match Huo Dong's level of physical fitness".

He stood with his legs apart. His stance was rather simple. He took out his Zhanmadao, held it with both hands, and swung it slowly. Although he was slow, Luo Yuan still managed to amaze them with his cool, smooth movement. Everyone was dazzled by his charm. The movement made the muscles on his back stand out. The muscles of his entire back had been used for that swing.

"Now you try it, Huo Dong. Everybody please look closely and note how we use our muscles differently," said Luo Yuan. Huo Dong seemed to realize something. He nodded and mimicked Luo Yuan in swinging the sword slowly. Luo Yuan stabbed the sword into the ground and asked, "What did you guys notice?"

"His muscles are crude while yours are refined," said Wang Shishi shyly. Luo Yuan was speechless. He thought it was pointless to ask the women, so he turned to Lin Xiaoji and asked him instead, "What do you think?"

"He was stiff when he swung the sword. He only used his back muscles and very little of his psoas muscles. His movement did not flow. When you did it, almost your entire back was involved." Although Lin Xiaoji had a low EQ, his vision was very good.

Luo Yuan nodded. “You are only half right. I did not just use my psoas and back during that swing. I also used my thighs and my hips. I used most of the muscles in my body. Drawing my strength from the ground, I held the toes of my right foot tight and bent my left knee, using all the strength in my thighs, hips and psoas. Eventually, I gathered more strength from my fingers and the muscles all over my body, forming a strong force. This is the first stage of sword training. You have to fully unleash all the strength you have inside your body.”

He pulled the sword from the ground and repeated the same slow swing. Closing his eyes, he adjusted his Strength and Agility to around +12. Suddenly, he swung the sword around swiftly. There was a swooshing sound in the air, as if a piece of cloth had been ripped apart. They could almost see a silver shadow forming by the motion of the swing before Luo Yuan retracted the sword again.

“This swing is what a man with Huo Dong’s body is capable of,” Luo Yuan said softly.

Everyone looked shocked. Even some of the soldiers seemed stunned. They could not believe what they had just heard. Luo Yuan’s speed during that swing had been way faster than Huo Dong’s when he had demonstrated earlier. His speed had been twice as fast while his force could have easily killed a blue level mutated beast.

After the initial shock, everyone got excited and could not wait to start training. Luo Yuan asked them to calm down before he said, “This is only the first stage of the training. I know most of you were shocked to see a glow coming off my swing. You are probably

wondering if I've had internal strength training.”

Commander Xia turned serious. He had been wanting to ask that question for a long time. He had already reported this to the staff. If they had not had to go back to rehabilitation area, the military would have sent someone over to investigate. After all, this matter was not just crucial to the reconstruction, but also mankind as a whole. If legendary internal strength really did exist, it would be beneficial for humanity.

“Of course I haven't. The glow is a symbol of the second stage of sword training. There's a term in the Book of Buddhism called 'The Communion of Essence, Chi and Spirit'. From what I understand 'essence' is the body, 'chi' is the blood, and 'spirit' is the Will. When these three elements come together, this glow is formed,” said Luo Yuan.

With a serious expression, he swung his sword around, a brimming cloud flowing like water over the sword's body. Everyone held their breath, scared that they would blow the cloud away if they breathed too hard. Luo Yuan laughed and fanned the glow away. “This happens when you concentrate your Will. Or to put it simply, when you are focused.”

“Everyone gets distracted. Buddha said that humans have 900 thoughts in the blink of an eye. He meant that people have countless thoughts anytime, anywhere. Getting rid of those distractions is the most important factor. In my experience, daily meditation helps. A second method is hypnosis. People are the most focused when they are facing dangerous situations, because at that moment their focus is only on one thing. Using an

imaginary enemy for hypnosis helps a lot, but it's even better if you have really been through a dangerous situation.”

“In many novels, the main character will look for a challenge or expose themselves to a dangerous situation so their power will increase faster. It's the same metaphor. However, the most crucial factor is not fearing death. There's no distinction between the first and second stage. They could basically be taught at the same time. I can't say the same for the third stage, though, because I am still exploring it.”

## Chapter 210: Calm

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The third stage would naturally be proficiency, mastery and expertise. Proficiency in muscle coordination, mastery of Will, as well as expertise and exploration of the force field.

Until now, Luo Yuan had still been on the verge of exploring the force field. He thought that it had something to do with feeling and perception. When one reached that stage, the effect of a system upgrade would be minimal, while the effects of proficiency, mastery and expertise would vastly differ. Usually a one point increase in skill points would have the same value in a skill upgrade, but when it came to the expert level, a skill would need at last three additional points in order to upgrade. Therefore, the upgrade would be three times as slow. If one depended on the system to breakthrough to the expert level, that would mean that they would need an additional 60 skill points. It would take 12 upgrades to get those points.

It seemed simple but in reality, Luo Yuan was only at level eight. To be able to upgrade 12 times, a lifetime may not be enough time for him. Instead of rushing things, he would rather learn slowly along the journey. He had obtained five points from his last upgrade, but had decided to keep them for an emergency.

He walked towards the aircraft, pulled out his Zhanmadao and cut off a big piece of metal, letting out a sharp groan. A glow shined everywhere. He used the sword to shred the metal, leaving small metal pieces scattered all over the ground. Minutes later, there were more than ten long blades lying there. The material of the aircraft was excellent. It could even be compared to the Zhanmadao. If he polished it, it could easily chop off metal bars.

“Those of you who don’t have a sword, please take one. Today I’m going to teach you how to swing your sword as well as the correct way to use force!” said Luo Yuan. Luo Yuan’s earlier performance had amazed everyone. Although it had just been a simple swing, it had gotten them all excited. They stood up immediately. Those who already owned a sword pulled it out, while the rest picked one up from the ground.

“The way you're holding your swords is wrong. Everyone please look at my hand! Don’t just squeeze all your strength into your fingers. That would make your body stiff and make it impossible for you to gather the force that you need. However, that doesn’t mean that you should hold your sword loosely. If you do, your swing will be powerless and the sword will leave your hands easily.”

“Before you swing your sword, your body needs to be both relaxed and focused. Be prepared to release your force when you swing.”

“You need an imaginary enemy, and your vision needs to be sharp. You need to give out a today-is-the-day-you-die vibe to your enemy when you swing.”

“What are you looking at? Don’t look at me, look at your target!”

Wang Shishi unwillingly turned her eyes to the front.

“What’s wrong with your legs? Why are they so tight? I’ve said it



three times already, your legs are your body's spring. If you hold them so tight, how will they be able to bounce? Your waist is too stiff, just relax!"

Huang Jiahui looked unhappy.

"Why is your butt so high up? All you need to do is move your body forward a little!"

Zhao Yali was blushing. She wanted the earth to open up and swallow her. Not everyone was like those protagonists in novels with impressive memory and strong athletic genes. Actually, none of them were like that. At first, Luo Yuan was very patient in correcting everyone's posture, but later on, he started to get a little impatient. These people were just hopeless. To be fair, Huo Dong, Lin Xiaoji and Wang Xianguang had some potential. They had been training for some time and would correct themselves according to his guidance. The rest of them, however, were as dumb as they came. They would forget his words immediately after he'd said them, testing his patience.

Wang Shishi, Zhao Yali and Mu Wenwen were driving Luo Yuan nuts. Surprisingly, the two young boys were very focused. Although their movement was painful to watch, they were still better than the three women.

As they watched Luo Yuan get more and more impatient, everyone started to get scared. The pressure was getting intense, and they were getting even worse than before.

“Never mind. Baby steps. In our first lesson, we're going to learn how to stand!”

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The training lasted from afternoon till evening. It was just one simple swing, but they could not manage to perfect it. Still, everyone had made some improvement. Wang Xianguang and everyone else who had been doing sword training noticed an obvious improvement in their speed.

The sun was setting, and the sky was getting dark. Luo Yuan looked at the time and said, “That’s it for today, let’s continue tomorrow!” Everyone was relieved. The half day of training had required their full body strength and was just starting to take its toll on them. Everyone was exhausted. They were so sore that they could not feel their bodies anymore. Some of them even had cramps on their fingertips. None of them had dared slow down throughout the training. Even soft Wang Shishi had pushed through.

Later on, everyone started to prepare dinner. The intense training had given everyone a great appetite, and they all gorged down their food. The sky was getting dark, and the wind was blowing. Some of them looked up into the sky and started to feel upset. The chatter died away as everyone turned solemn.

As they finished their dinner, the thing they had been most afraid of appeared in the sky. It was the aurora once again. The beautiful view gave everyone a chill. Their food suddenly tasted bland.

“Finish your food fast and head back into the cave!” Luo Yuan shouted.

Everyone snapped out of it, their faces turning pale. They threw aside the bowls in their hands and ran frantically into the cave. The cave was dark, humid and constrained. None of them talked, so it was strangely silent inside. All they could hear was their heavy breathing and the sound of their hearts pounding.

They waited patiently for almost half an hour, hearing the sound of thunder outside. This time, the thunderstorm was not as intense as the previous day. It was much more sporadic and it did not last as long. It was completely over by midnight.

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The next five days, the auroras and thunderstorms got weaker and weaker. On the sixth day, they disappeared completely. Although the thunderstorm was only a storm, it had caused a huge impact on the earth, the most direct effect being the rise of the temperature.

On the last day of the thunderstorm, the temperature during the day had reached 60 degrees. In the afternoon, the entire forest had experienced a high temperature, and everyone's vision had gotten slightly distorted. A huge amount of steam had formed clumps of clouds on top of the forest. At the same time, the plants were growing and evolving every day, just like they had at the beginning of the apocalypse. The roots of the mutated plants went almost a

hundred meters deep into the ground. The rise of the temperature and the evaporation of the water had not stopped the plants from growing. Quite the contrary, they looked livelier than ever.

The trees that had been damaged by the aircraft had started growing again. In the course of five or six days, they had already grown two meters tall. If Luo Yuan did not clean the forest in time, it would become really crowded in less than a month.

Everyone was filled with fear as they looked at the forest around them. They were smiling and talking less and less, feeling like a huge rock had been dropped on their chests. Despite their immense stress though, everyone was still striving to master the sword and get stronger.

# Chapter 211: Water

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In the morning, when the sky was still dark, Luo Yuan brought a big washbasin to the creek. The washbasin was made of steel and was about half a meter in diameter. It had been made using parts from the aircraft. Although Luo Yuan had made it as thin as he could, it still weighed more than 10 kilos. It could almost be used as a shield.

Although it was still early on the morning, the temperature was already high. It was more than 30 degrees, but compared to noon, no doubt this was the coolest time of the day.

The thunderstorm had been gone for five days, and the silent forest was regaining its liveliness. There were mutated beasts around, and the chirping sound of bugs could be heard. Compared to a few days earlier, it was a lot noisier.

Luo Yuan walked slowly as he frowned. He held the Zhanmadao in his right hand and cut the branches along the way. The leaves were bright green and new, obviously grown overnight. Layers of dried leaves were covering the ground, which was soft and wet from the morning dew. Under the leaves, the soil was like powder.

It had not rained in more than 10 days. That was usually normal in the west, but given the current high temperature, it could prove fatal. Strangely, the plants were still growing very fast. Maybe their roots had already been deep within the ground, and that was why they had not been affected. However, it was a different story for mutated beasts. Because of the high temperature, the water was evaporating quickly and the water level of the creek had been

dropping day by day. From what Luo Yuan had observed the previous day, there would be a water shortage within the next two days if the weather remained like that. Judging by the weather now, it was definitely going to be a hot day.

Luo Yuan arrived at the creek with a heavy heart. What he saw there was even worse than what he had imagined. Within a day, the water would be completely gone. There had still been one foot of water the previous day, yet that day there were barely 10 centimeters of water left. There were dead fish and shrimp everywhere. The fish had probably died less than two days ago, but the high temperature had accelerated their decomposition. There were already maggots all over them, and some of them had been bitten by mutated beasts. The water in the creek had turned brown from the decomposing carcasses, and there was a pungent stench all over caused by the maggots and mutated flies. Nobody would want to go near that water.

Luo Yuan frowned, his face looking gloomy. There was a scary atmosphere around as countless mutated flies the size of a fist fell to the ground. Luo Yuan followed the creek in an attempt to look for cleaner water. That creek was the only source of water in the area. There were mutated creatures all around the forest. Many of them were drinking water by the creek along the way, but fled as soon as they saw Luo Yuan. The gloom on Luo Yuan's face gave off a scary, beast-like vibe. Before he even got close, the mutated creatures would run away.

Of course there were some rebellious ones and some with very sharp teeth, which he instantly killed using his sabre. Luo Yuan carried them on his back and walked for almost half an hour. Just as he was about to give up, he finally reached a shallow pool. The

water there had been isolated from its source. What remained was only a small pool. It was barely more than a meter deep and as muddy as a quagmire, but he had no choice. Compared to the creek with the rotten fish, this was way better.

Luo Yuan filled the washbasin with muddy water and left right away. Considering the lack of water, this would be the place where the animals came to drink. Although he had gotten stronger, he did not have the confidence to romp in the forest.

He made his way back a lot faster. Although he was running on uneven ground, the water in the washbasin did not spill. In about ten minutes, he had made his way back to the campsite. The campsite was different this time, because they'd wanted to avoid what had happened to them last time. The trees within a 30-meter radius from the aircraft had been chopped off, the weeds had been cleared away, and some stakes had been planted into the ground to make it firmer.

Despite their efforts though, there were always new leaves growing from the ground the next morning. Since that was the coolest time of the day, they all practiced with their swords then. Most of the guys took off their tops and let the sweat flow down their upper bodies. They practiced repetitively without complaining. Every time they swung their swords, it sounded as if the air was being sliced.

That day, Luo Yuan focused on the use of muscles. As long as everyone practiced the same move over and over again, it would become muscle memory and eventually, turn into instinct. As a matter of fact, considering the suffocating amount of stress,

everyone was more determined than Luo Yuan had imagined. Whenever they had time, they would practice vigorously.

Compared to 10 days ago, they had all improved. At least they were not as horrible as they had used to be. Maybe it was because of the correct use of force, but most of them had noticed changes in their physique. Their stiff, stubborn muscles had softened and been replaced by more defined muscles. All of them looked like they had lost weight, and gained explosive force and strength instead.

However, the ones Luo Yuan was the most proud of were the two kids, Deng Chao and Zhong Chuqiang. Maybe it was because of their immense insecurity, but they looked as if they did not care if they died during training. They were even gesturing and flexing their muscles when they were eating or sleeping. Although they were still very far behind Huo Dong, Wang Xiaguang and the rest, with their determination and innocence, they might be even able to achieve the glow or release the forcefield eventually.

When Luo Yuan got back, Huang Jiahui put down her weapon, wiped off her sweat and took the washbasin from him. Looking at the water inside it, she started shaking and asked, “Is there no more water out there?”

“I think it will all be gone in the next two days.” Luo Yuan shook his head before he went on, “It looks like we can’t count on that creek anymore. I will go into the forest in the afternoon and look for a new source of water.”

They had not lowered their voices, so most people had heard



what they said. They all put down their weapons and walked up to them, looking worried. When they saw the muddy water, their expression changed. It was fatal to not have water, especially under those weather conditions. Everyone had to drink a lot of water. If there was none, they would not last for more than a day. Even Luo Yuan would not be able to last longer.

“There's no need to worry,” Luo Yuan comforted them after thinking for a while. “Even if we can't find a new water source, many plants contain massive amount of waters. As long as we look carefully, I'm sure we can find them.”

“How nice it would be if we could find that sap that we used to drink,” said Huo Dong.

Wang Shishi gulped. She could still remember how amazing that sap had tasted.

“That's completely up to luck. Why don't we just dig a well?” asked Commander Xia.

“I don't think so, Commander. We are in the West, and water is very scarce here. We will need to dig a few dozen or even hundreds of meters deep in order to find water. Plus, we are on the mountainside. The terrain here is higher and there are only rocks below. Unless we're lucky enough to find an underground river, we won't find water until we've dug hundreds of meters deep!” said a soldier.

“Why don't we collect morning dew? I remember there was a

part about that in Amazon Crusoe!” said Cao Lin.

“I think you mean Robinson Crusoe,” Lin Xiaoji interrupted.

Cao Lin blushed, but she ignored him. “I noticed that the evaporation in the forest is intense, and morning dew comes in big droplets. We could use leaves to collect them!”

Luo Yuan’s eyes brightened up. “I think we could do that. We'd have to cover a big area to be able to collect enough water for everyone, though. Once we're done with breakfast, let’s all go to the forest to collect leaves.”

“Do we have to go, too?” Zhao Yali asked.

“Everyone has to go. We have been practicing every day. It's time we put your skill to the test. We have to leave this place at some point after all. I can’t be protecting you guys forever,” said Luo Yuan.

Everyone was stunned by his words.

# Chapter 212: Excitement

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Although some of them were not willing to do what they'd been told, none of them said anything. Humans were used to obeying their superiors. Superiority lay in power, wealth and primitive physical strength. In modern society, physical strength had become the most insignificant factor of superiority. It was not comparable to the other two. However, during a time of apocalypse and isolation, it was no doubt the most significant quality.

Luo Yuan was the most powerful person among the team, so naturally he was their superior. It was a mutual understanding. Even the soldiers who had just joined did not have any thoughts of betrayal. It was an unwritten rule that even their own superior, Commander Xia, abode by. Their obedience was of a higher level because they were in the military.

Luo Yuan was handling the creature he had captured earlier while the rest of them were preparing the fire. Pretty soon, breakfast was served. They sat together and ate quietly. Not many of them were talking. Everyone looked tense, and the atmosphere was heavy.

Wei Xiaohu was chewing on a plant stalk. The plant was delicious and it exuded an indescribable fragrance, but its texture was rough. It scratched his esophagus whenever he swallowed. Still, that kind of pain was nothing for a soldier who had lived their life to the fullest. Wei Xiaohu had been in the army for half a year. He had gone through three months of training and participated in seven missions. A few of them had been major battles, so he could even be considered a veteran.

He had joined the military as a refugee, just like many others. Hundreds of thousands of refugees fled to the rehabilitation area every month. There were both gifted people as well as weak and old civilians. Most of them were forced to enlist. Although Wei Xiaohu had finished high school and was working in a private enterprise assembly line at the time, he had still been considered just a soldier in the military. Much like an assembly line in a factory, there were countless soldiers dying and enlisting every day. Human life was merely a cheap consumable. The only difference was that they were soldiers, and not products.

Wei Xiaohu had been lucky that the aircraft had crashed into that forest. Had it crashed into the rehabilitation area, he could have been sent on a battle mission again. Of course, he could also have become food for mutated beasts, or an insignificant dead soldier in a military staff report.

Danger was really close, though. Wei Xiaohu peeked at Luo Yuan. Perhaps he had not noticed him, but Wei Xiaohu was looking at him with respect. Sensing someone looking at him, Luo Yuan turned in the soldier's direction. Wei Xiaohu bowed his head immediately, trying to hide by drinking his soup. When Luo Yuan turned away again, he felt relieved. His heart was pounding, and he hated himself for feeling like that. Luo Yuan was not a mutated beast. Why did he have to be afraid of him?

Luo Yuan swallowed his last piece of meat and put down his cutlery. When they saw him, everyone started eating faster. They finished their meal within a minute.

“Let’s not waste any more time. The sun hasn’t fully risen yet, and the temperature is still bearable. Let’s get going!”

Huang Jiahui looked at the kids and felt soft-hearted. “Let Chen Jiayi and the rest stay. Wouldn’t it be too dangerous for them to come?”

Only Huang Jiahui and a few women close to Luo Yuan had the audacity to question him.

Luo Yuan looked at the three kids, but they did not dare say anything. They just kept their heads low. They were all nervous except Deng Chao, who looked excited.

Luo Yuan thought that kids were always the bravest, but they were still too young and weak. If they were to follow, they could die at any time without supervision. He nodded and said, “Alright, the three of you can stay here. Hide inside the cave, and don’t come out. Remember to lock the cabin door.”

Deng Chao and the rest nodded hard. “Yes sir!”

Everyone checked their sleeves and pant legs, tying them carefully again. Then they checked their daggers, firearms and other weapons again and again, until they made sure everything was ready to go.

It had been almost a year since the apocalypse had started, so everyone had become survival experts by now. For instance, they

knew that pant legs and sleeves were entrances that creatures could creep through easily, so they had to be tied at all times. Only when they were sure that a place was safe, would they untie them so their blood could circulate better. When they were ready, everyone picked up their weapons and followed Luo Yuan into the forest.

The field and the forest were two entirely different worlds. Once they stepped inside the forest, it was as if it was already evening. The air was chilly, and they were all soaking in sweat.

As they stepped on the soft, dry leaves, many bizarre bugs and mutated creatures fled in their wake. A few of them even tried to crawl up their legs. Some of the creatures were so colourful, it was terrifying.

Huo Dong was walking in the back, his hand holding his sword really tight, his body stiff as a bow. His face was unusually tense, and his eyes were looking everywhere while he listened to the sounds all around them. He felt like this time Boss Luo was not as careful as he usually was. It seemed like he did not care anymore. Boss Luo would usually walk in the middle, but this time, he was walking in front and wouldn't even bother to look back.

It seemed like they had to rely on themselves now, he thought distractedly. Suddenly, a strong throbbing feeling rose within his heart, at the same time that a strong wind blew from the back of his head. He got goosebumps.

“Here it is!” That thought flashed through his mind like lightning. He instinctively pulled his sword out, turned around

and swung it twice without thinking. All his movements were smooth, as if he'd had thousands of years of training. A two-meter long, snake-like mutated beast with wings had been pierced by his sword.

The beast's body was tough, so the sword had only managed to pierce through one quarter of it. The pain had triggered the beast's viciousness. Once it landed on the ground, it used its tail to bounce back toward him. Luckily, Huo Dong reacted fast, holding his sword and leaning back. Like a leopard ready to charge, he leapt towards the beast like an arrow. The tip of his sword landed on the soft ground like lightning.

The strong force cut the snake-like beast into half along with the ground. It pierced it 30 to 40 centimeters deep. Seeing that the situation had been taken care of, Luo Yuan dropped his hands, which had been holding his weapon tight. The mission was just to test everybody's strength. He did not want any of them to die. Luo Yuan would still take care of them if he needed to. He might not have turned his head around along the way, but his instincts had still been on alert, paying attention to their surroundings. Given his response time, as long as the mutated creatures were not too fast, he could save the whole team in a matter of seconds.

Everyone had felt something happening behind them and had stopped walking.

“Are you okay?” Cao Lin asked, turning around.

Huo Dong swung his sword a few more times to cut off the snake's head and kill it once and for all. He stood up, his breathing

a little fast as he said, "I... I'm okay."

His face was a little pale, but he looked excited. He had never been as smooth during training as he had been just now. He had been as smooth as flowing water. As he'd swung his sword, his entire body strength had been fully concentrated and unleashed. Although the fight had made him sore all over his body, he was still happy and a lot less nervous.

Luo Yuan noticed Huo Dong's exhaustion, so he asked everyone to take a break before they kept going. As they went deeper into the forest, there were more and more mutated creatures making an appearance. They seemed to be in constant danger. The number of the mutated creatures made their brains numb. Most of them moved at high speed and attacked them unexpectedly. They were different from the mutated beasts near the sea in that they were much more dangerous. In only 10 minutes, there had been quite a few alarming incidents.

On one particular occurrence, the mutated creature had been way too strong to handle, so Luo Yuan had had to interfere and help them. The remaining incidents were handled by the rest of the group, though. As there was more and more danger, their insecurity faded away and was replaced by excitement. They realized that their training the past 10 days had paid off. As long as they kept improving their strength, they would get to survive longer.



## Chapter 213: Strong Enemy Nearby

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Slowly, Luo Yuan noticed something bizarre. Up to that point, Mu Wenwen had not even been attacked once. She was somewhere near the middle, yet she had not been attacked, even though Wang Xianguang and Cao Lin who were walking in front of and behind her respectively both had been. It was as if the mutated beasts could not see her.

He suddenly realized that he had not been paying a lot of attention to her. She barely ever took the initiative to speak and she usually preferred to be alone. She was like a gust of air, her presence was as if she was inexistent.

He could not believe that he himself had actually ignored this relatively beautiful, extremely dangerous, evolved woman. If her abnormality had not been too obvious this time, he might not have noticed it.

He could not help but look back at her direction a few times. She doubtfully raised her head to stare back at him. Her black and white pupils were like clear spring water, an overwhelming temptation that captivated people. Luo Yuan took a glance at her, and dared not look again. If this was a concealment technique she was using, it was very professional.

It was definitely not easy to do it. The human body was a very complex force field, continuously emanating brainwaves of various frequencies. As the infrared waves caused by an electromagnetic field of electrochemical reaction and temperature got stronger, this composite force field got stronger too.

Luo Yuan was superhuman in many ways, so the strength of the force field he released was almost comparable to that of light green mutated beasts. No matter how hard he tried to control it, he was still like a torch in the dark. Shiny and bright, able to be spotted at first sight, even when he was standing in a crowd. After all, brainwaves could be restrained by Will, but the intense electromagnetic field of electrochemical reaction and infrared waves produced by his strong body could not be completely eliminated.

Therefore, regardless of how hard he tried to hide or control himself, his aura stood out more than a normal person's.

He could not understand how she did it. It might be related to her ability. After all, such a concealment technique was completely beyond Luo Yuan's understanding.

Suddenly, there was a commotion. Commander Xia pointed towards some tree stumps up ahead and said, "Look, Brother Luo. What's happened to those trees?"

Luo Yuan pulled back from his thoughts and looked in the direction the Commander was pointing at in shock.

From where they were standing, they could see tree stumps everywhere. There were hundreds of tree stumps of similar height with no sign of being broke off. They looked like they had been chopped off with tools instead.

Luo Yuan's expression turned grave. Before the apocalypse, such a scene would have been normal because illegal logging had been quite widespread. However, they were currently facing the apocalypse, and this was an extremely dangerous ancient forest with no trace of human activity around. Under those circumstances, it was strange to see so many tree stumps.

“Let’s go and check it out!” Luo Yuan said.

Soon, they reached a tree stump about 1.7 meters in diameter. Although the tree must have been very large, they were not astonished to see that there were plenty of it inside the ancient forest.

New seedlings of about three to four meters had grown from the tree stumps. According to the growth rate of plants, the trees should have been cut down a few days ago. Commander Xia walked carefully forward, chopping off any branches to expose the tree stumps completely. When he took a closer look, he was stunned for a moment. Finally, he said with a grave expression, “I’m afraid this was not done by man. The blade used to chop off this tree must have been about half a meter wide. The scar of the cut is too coarse, so the tool used was obviously not sharp enough. However, if it was still able to chop off such a large tree, it must have been very strong.”

One needed extremely sharp tools when it came to chopping trees. People usually used axes. A weapon with a half-meter wide blade could not have been used by a human.

“Is that a drag trail?” Huo Dong said suspiciously, pointing at a

long print on the ground. “What would the mutated beasts want the wood for?”

“Perhaps to use as firewood?” Lin Xiaoji said with a hollow laugh.

Nobody found it funny.

“To build nests or make weapons. Both seem plausible,” Luo Yuan said seriously. “There's one thing we know for sure. This type of creature must possess a certain level of intelligence if they know how to use tools.”

Commander Xia felt his heart become gradually heavier. He responded only after a while, “If they really are intelligent creatures, there must be a lot of them. This area has traces of logging, and there could be even more ahead. There must be at least of hundreds of them, possibly even more.”

Everyone's faces turned pale. Although the weather was hot, they felt a chill go down their spines.

“Let's leave right away! We wouldn't want them to find us,” Zhao Yali said in panic.

“Alright, we'll talk about this later,” Luo Yuan said. He knew nothing about the abilities or the number of these mysterious creatures, so it would undoubtedly be very reckless of them if they kept going. Besides, he had a group of encumbrance with him.

Hearing his words, everyone let out a sigh of relief.

The team quickly turned around. On the way back, Luo Yuan picked a tree with large leaves and collected the leaves they needed. They reached their campsite in less than ten minutes. Everyone looked worried and stressed, as if a giant stone was pressing on their hearts. Anyone would feel that stressed if they'd just found out a time bomb ready to explode at any time was in the area.

The place was too close to them, only about half an hour's journey away. In fact, it was less than three kilometers if one were to walk in a straight line. If Luo Yuan jogged, he could get there within five minutes.

They put the leaves inside the cave, walked to the shade and sat in a circle with their brows knitted.

“What if we leave?” Huang Jiahui suggested worriedly.

“And go where?” Luo Yuan asked, recovering from his thoughts.

“Away from here. Let's look for another place, or leave this mountain. We have been here long enough,” Huang Jiahui blurted. She still yearned for a normal life and the rehabilitation area was not too far away. Perhaps they could reach it in half a month.

“I’m afraid we can’t do it in such a short time. The high

temperature is making us sweat profusely, so we need lots of water. If we don't store enough water, we can't go anywhere," Commander Xia rebutted before Luo Yuan could say anything.

Everyone looked disappointed as signs of worry appeared on their faces.

After Luo Yuan pondered for a while, the trace of a cold smile formed on his face. "Let's not do anything rash yet. Let me check the situation out first."

Huang Jiahui seemed to want to advise him against it. Her lips moved, but in the end she just sighed. She knew perfectly well that she could not stop him.

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The Zhanmadao flashed through as a large tree fell with a loud crash.

After the dust had settled, Luo Yuan walked up to the tree, cut the trunk in half and held it straight, swishing his Zhanmadao around continuously. Five minutes later, a big section of the trunk had been turned into a heap of sticks.

Luo Yuan picked up a stick, weighed it and used his knife to scrape off the burrs on its surface, sharpening the tip and making it even shinier. Then he carefully put it into a large leather sack. One by one, he scraped and sharpened the sticks until the sack was

full. When he put the sack on his back, the ground sank slightly under his feet.

Fortunately, the straps of the sack had been made using the skin of a mutated beast, otherwise, the sack would have been torn open by the edges of the sticks.

Luo Yuan tried to walk for a few steps before he ran. The sack weighed about 200 kilos, but it so light that he felt as if he was not carrying anything. He finally stopped after a few tries, took out his Zhanmadao, and let it hang on his waist.

“Be careful. Don't risk coming back right away if it's too dangerous!” Huang Jiahui shouted worriedly as she watched Luo Yuan prepare to leave.

Luo Yuan nodded, glanced at the women, and walked directly into the deep forest without turning back.

# Chapter 214: Special Mission

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Carrying the 200-kilo sack, Luo Yuan walked forward step by step. He did not run so he could save energy, but his speed was still much faster than a normal person.

It was about noon, and the scorching sun increased the temperature, making Luo Yuan feel as if he was in a steamer, despite the fact that he was shaded by layers of trees.

He was not sweating profusely yet. There was only a sheer layer of sweat on his forehead due to the heavy weight he was carrying. If it were not for that, given his excellent Physique, he would hardly ever sweat, even during the hottest hours of the day.

Their camping site was not far from the logging area. Although Luo Yuan was not rushing, it only took him about 10 minutes to reach the destination.

Soon after he got there, Luo Yuan turned serious. He was no longer in a relaxed state.

He carefully walked forward, looking more solemn as he progressed. The logging area was huge. He roughly estimated that there were already about 1,000 cut trees, each tree about two meters in diameter. Suddenly, he heard a vague noise, a heavy sound with various complicated tones. Obviously, these were not common mutated beasts. He knew that he was getting closer to his destination; he carefully went over the sloping land and climbed up a giant rock at its highest point before he finally stopped.



He could everything from up there. There was a small valley at the bottom, but it looked different from the other areas, which were covered in dense trees. The valley was barren, and there were lots of tree stumps in it.

Further up front, there was a big heap of logs.

It was scorching hot, yet numerous large grey giants were carrying big heavy logs, yelled loudly and walking deep into the valley. That was obviously the log transfer station.

The giants were about five meters tall and grey in color. They did not have much hair other than on the back of their necks, which connected the head to the caudal vertebra. The rest of their bodies were completely smooth. Some giants had beast skins tied around their waists. Judging by their large bodies, those were obviously adult giants. Most of the smaller giants had nothing on them.

The majority had various weapons hanging from their waists, obtained mostly from mutated beasts, such as claws or teeth tightened to a stick using rattan.

Although the giants were man-like, there were also traces of a beast on them. For example, they did not have eyebrows, but they had two dark holes on their noses, and large U-shaped mouths as well as a lip that extended to their cheeks, making gripping and tearing meat easier.

Luo Yuan grimaced. Although he had been prepared for this, he

still felt a chill go down his entire body when he faced them. It was not due to the fact that the giants' looked very strong. In fact, even if it had been a group of light green or green beasts, Luo Yuan could still have retreated and gotten away from there, and he definitely would not have felt as tense.

However, these were not common mutated beasts. These giants were a group of beings with a certain intelligence; they had formed a relatively primitive society and had learned the basics of utilizing tools. They might have even created their own language, and their number was not small by any means. From what he could see, there were already hundreds of them, and there might be even more deep inside the valley. These giants were strong, and their intelligence level was not low either. If they reproduced at a faster rate, they might even be able to challenge the status of humans at the top of the food chain.

Luo Yuan looked serious. Within two short months, he had already seen two kinds of intelligent species. The first encounter was only that one mutated beast, though. This was a large group. The frequency of these intelligent beasts appearing was increasing, and those were not the only ones he had seen. There might be even more out there that he hadn't come across yet.

Would civilization transmigrate? Maybe after hundreds of years, there would be a new species on the Earth, going through what human beings were currently going through.

Luo Yuan took a deep breath and tried to suppress his thoughts as he kept observing the giants.

These giants were extremely strong. They were so muscular that a huge, 10-ton log only required seven to eight giants to be carried easily. They also seemed to react fast and their rhythm of action was fast as well, so their Agility had to be high. He estimated a minimum of 12 to 13 points, but he was not sure if that was during a battle.

Their weapons could be used from a short distance, but beings with high intelligence could use stones to attack, so Luo Yuan still had to be careful.

Overall, the giants' abilities could be ranked between dark blue and light green. Provided that none of them surpassed the light green level, they would not be a threat to his safety, so he only needed to be concerned about their numbers and the fact that an attack by him could cause a chain of reactions. However, he still thought he could run away if he was unable to beat them. Considering his speed, he believed that he would not be overtaken.

Suddenly, there was a notification sound from the system. The mission this time was a bit different than the previous one.

“E Level Special Mission: Wipe out the Grey Giant Tribe and kill all intelligent beings in it.”

“Tip: This is a Special Mission, so the actual difficulty has been lowered by one level.”

“Time Limit: None”

“Accept/Decline?”

“Special mission! What’s happening? Is it related to that intelligent species?” Luo Yuan wondered doubtfully.

However, he did not have any more time to ponder it. The mission had been downgraded to E-Level, and he was not sure whether an E-Level Mission was equal to light green beast difficulty, which was no longer a threat to him.

He restrained his urge for a killing spree, put down the sack with the short spears and slowly took out one. The distance between him and the heap of logs was about 150 meters, which was a good shooting range for him. Besides, he was standing on a higher ground, so it was definitely the best place for him to attack.

Shooting and killing them one by one would not cause a sense of danger on the group, which might cause them to escape in all directions. Instead, it would provoke them into retaliating. He clearly understood the difficulty of this mission. He didn't just have to defeat them. He had to wipe out the entire tribe and leave no survivors behind.

He took out a short spear and stood up. The next moment, his body moved in a blur. and the short spear in his hand was gone. From the spot where he stood, it seemed like it had exploded and caused a violent gust of wind.

The spear produced a sonic boom as it plunged forward. In the blink of an eye, the whole spear had landed and sunk completely

into the ground, up to its very grip. The nearest giant had been about 10 meters away.

Missed!

Sweat dripped down Luo Yuan's forehead as he shook his head and took out another spear.

However, the attack had shocked the giants nearby and many of them, who had been carrying logs, dropped them, causing the logs to roll onto other giants and create a commotion. More giants became vigilant as they took out their weapons and repeatedly checked their surroundings.

Bang!

There was another loud noise.

After slightly adjusting the force used in his muscles, Luo Yuan had finally hit his target. The giant nearest to him suddenly jolted, the short spear exploding into dust causing it to create a smoke ring on its chest as it sank quickly, transferring the terrifying force through the giant's flesh, until it exploded on its back, creating a hole the size of a washbasin.

Such a wound could make even a 5-meter tall giant feel lethargic.

The giant's eyes were wide, and its mouth was open, a large amount of blood oozing out as the giant fell heavily to its knees on

the ground.

The wood that Luo Yuan had chosen as a material for his short spears was not very hard. In fact, its light blue rank made it very fragile. However, when it was moving at a high speed, anything the spear hit turned into a dust made of wood due to its strong momentum, the kinetic energy being completely absorbed by the target. As a result, it didn't just have a terrifying amount of killing power, but the size of the wound it produced was also very large.

There was another explosion, and a giant who was still perplexed by the sudden attack suddenly felt a pain on its leg. By the time the giant slumped down to the ground, its whole leg had already disappeared.

Loud crashes could be heard one after the other, as if there was thunder somewhere in the distance. One by one, the giants fell down. Although Luo Yuan had slowed down on purpose to prevent the giants from escaping out of fear, he still managed to slay seven giants within a mere 30 seconds.

There were growls of anger, screams of fear and howls of pain. The scene was a total mess. Suddenly, one of the giants spotted Luo Yuan and pointed in his direction, growling like thunder.

The surviving giants looked in that direction and saw a small silhouette standing upright on the hillside, its hand slowly pulling out a strange-looking weapon.

The look on the giants' faces gradually became ferocious, their

fiery aura spreading.

After a letting out a howl, the giants who were still able to stand bellowed and launched themselves towards Luo Yuan. They kicked up a large amount of dust, causing the Earth to tremble slightly. There was only about a dozen of them left, but their force was like that of a stampede as they rushed over.

## Chapter 215: Brazier

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One hundred and fifty meters was not far for the giants, nor for Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan threw away the short spear in his hand, steadily moving his arms to make sure that his muscles were not strained or aching. His 14-point Physique had made his muscle fibers tougher, and they did not get injured as easily anymore.

The giants kept getting closer, their loud howls buzzing in Luo Yuan's ears. He opened his eyelids slightly to look at them as they rushed over. A flicker of a cold smirk crossed his face.

He immediately held the handle of his Zhanmadao tighter, his body suddenly becoming a blur as he disrupted the surrounding airflow and disappeared from his original spot. He was carrying the Zhanmadao in his right hand, crouched like a fierce tiger, his toes stepping hard on the soft soil and stirring up dead leaves a few meters high into the air. Each step he took was about five to six meters apart as he sprinted down the hill.

A giant with a big stick in its hand appeared, wearing a ferocious grin. Its grin split its face in half, giving it a fearsome look. As it rushed over, there was something dangling indistinctly under its skin. Before it could manage to come near though, a heavy bloody smell blew on its face.

Luo Yuan frowned in disgust and leapt up high like a swallow, making his body smaller as he brushed past the giant. Meanwhile,



the silverish-white Zhanmadao flashed through the air, and the giant's ugly head shot up under the high pressure of the blood gushing out from its neck. The headless giant continued to run for a few steps before it slumped down on the ground, twitching unnaturally.

As Luo Yuan hit the ground, he run like an agile cheetah into the group of giants and begun killing them with his Zhanmadao.

Their large body size made them larger targets, and as Luo Yuan was both faster and quicker to react, they ended up getting killed gruesomely. Wherever he passed, there were amputated limbs, fresh blood and human-like howls and roars.

Most giants did not die on the spot, because Luo Yuan was only as tall as their thighs. Therefore, most of them just had their legs amputated, the only difference being whether they had one or two legs cut off.

Although it had been less than 10 seconds after Luo Yuan had sprinted into the group, more than 30 giants were already badly injured. On average, he had amputated about three giant legs per second. The giants had been spreading out; otherwise the number of amputated legs per second would have been even higher.

Luo Yuan's silhouette had turned into a high-speed shadow; one moment he was at one spot, amputating a giant's head with a quick swish of his Zhanmadao, and the next moment he had disappeared to a place about ten meters away. His sharp Zhanmadao could easily cut through the thigh muscles and bones of the giants. Any giant who tried to escape would slump down on the ground after

taking a few steps as both their legs would have already been separated from their body.

The giants were crying miserably on the hillside, the strong smell of blood attracting a lot of attention. Branches were moving about intensely, there was tumult in the tussock, and even some shadows could be seen hovering overhead.

In 30 seconds, no giant could stand up straight anymore, and those giants who could no longer escape because their lost legs were struggling and crying in pools of blood. Miserable, sharp, loud noises were heard echoing in the valley.

Luo Yuan was standing, fresh blood dripping down the edge of his Zhanmadao. Soon, it became as shiny as new. He panted for a few seconds before his breathing quickly became even again. After that last point had been added to his Physique, his ability to recover had improved by leaps and bounds, becoming insanely fast.

He scanned through his surroundings, his eyes as sharp as a knife. He had scared off the giants who had been crawling on their hands, making them forget the pain and shiver in desperation instead.

They were producing some weird sounds. Perhaps they were imploring or scolding, but neither of those things would change their final destiny. Luo Yuan quickly rushed over to kill them all. Soon, there were more headless corpses lying on the ground.

“Finally completed the first step!” Luo Yuan thought silently, his face looking slightly delighted. He got back to the hilltop, picked up the sack with the short spears, put it on his back and briskly walked into the deep valley.

After Luo Yuan had completely disappeared from sight, several mutated beasts surged out of the forest towards the bodies and began tearing them apart.

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Luo Yuan met some returning giants on his way down, thus confirming that he was in the right direction. Of course, he killed them all too.

The larger trees by the roadside had been cut off and only tree stumps had been left behind. All along the way, he had seen more than two thousand tree stumps, and the number only increased as he progressed. His face looked grave. He did not know what the giants were doing with these logs, but their number was big enough to build a small city already.

After walking for a few kilometers, Luo Yuan reached a large cliff.. He took a closer look and saw many caves with giants in them. However, what seemed strange to him was the thick ascending smoke that saturated the air with a heavy smoky smell. Hot waves of it occasionally blew on his face.

He slowed down and hid amidst the tussock as he crept forward. After about 10 minutes, the heatwave had already become burning

hot. The temperature was more than 70 degree Celsius, causing the tussocks nearby to dry up. A flicker of a doubt flashed through Luo Yuan's mind, but he walked a few steps forward. When he pushed the grass aside, what he saw shocked him.

There was a huge brazier in an open space in front of the cliff. He roughly estimated that it was about a hundred meters wide, with a raging flame that occasionally reached about a hundred meters into the air. Numerous giants were sweating profusely while they threw logs into the huge brazier. Their skin appeared to have been scorched by the high temperature, and their hair had curled up. However, they still looked solemn and excited.

The high temperature was indeed a tough challenge even for the thick, rough skin of the giants; none of them could endure it for more than three rounds, so they were all replaced quickly.

The number of giants were incredible. Counting the ones standing in the open space, there were already 156 and there were countless more looking from a cliff above. It was difficult to differentiate between the giants as they all looked the same; solemn and enthusiastic.

Luo Yuan had considered many possibilities about what the giants were using those logs for. A few examples that came to mind were that the logs had been used to build houses, make weapons for hunting, or build fences for defense. However, it had never crossed his mind that the giants had been chopping down the trees to ignite a huge brazier.

After observing them for a while, Luo Yuan began to understand

their actions. Fear of fire had been imprinted deep into the genetic material of every living thing, and that fear had also turned into worship - an ancient kind of worship that all human beings had gone through.

Besides, the brazier was not used only for religious purposes. It could also be used to prevent other mutated beasts from getting close. Therefore, that brazier had the ability to save the lives of countless giants living in that dangerous forest.

In fact, the ability to use fire was a critical step for the development of an intelligent species.

As Luo Yuan thought of the freshness of most of those tree stumps, he confirmed that this fire pit had not been made too long ago. Therefore, the incident that had taught the giants how to use fire must have been recent. He thought that incident must have been related to the thunderstorm and the forest fire that had taken place not long ago. That must have been the turning point.

Human beings had experienced millions of years of eating raw food before they found fire during the Neolithic Period. However, it looked like those creatures had only needed a few days. Even if it had taken them a long time, it would still have been less than two years. There was a huge gap between two years and millions of years. The thought that this group of intelligent creatures had progressed so fast chilled Luo Yuan. He could not imagine how they would evolve if they were to live for another few years.

An urge to wipe off the entire group flashed through his eyes as he realized that he could not spare even a single one of them.

Still, killing them all would be extremely difficult. He carefully observed his surroundings, his eyes finally landing on the cliff and staying there.

The cliff was about 300 meters high, and its slope very steep, almost 90 degrees. The surface had traces of it being polished, looking smooth without any holes or crevices for hands to hold on to. There was only a zigzag path extending from the bottom inner part of the cliff up to the middle of it.

Excavating such a path from the inner part of the cliff must have been an enormous undertaking even for those powerful giants. A few giants could still be seen excavating at the top, which proved that they were planning on elongating the path.

All the caves on the cliff had been dug along that path.

The topography of the place was easy to defend, but difficult to attack from. One man could hold out against tens of thousands of enemies. However, one would have no choice but to enter from the entrance of the path at the base of the cliff if they wanted to kill the giants.

Luo Yuan frowned deeply.

# Chapter 216: Animalistic

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It was still daylight, and some giants could still be out hunting, so it was not a good time to start the massacre. Besides, they might not be able to bear the massive casualties and fear, and try to flee in disorder. In that case, chasing after them or ambushing them would be too much trouble.

Intelligent creatures were different than normal mutated beasts. Their wisdom allowed them to know how to use tools and have a certain degree of organization and discipline. As a result, they could still beat him, even though they were weak. A hasty attack would definitely not be a wise choice on his part.

Luo Yuan observed the surrounding topography carefully and retreated prudently.

After half an hour, he was back at the campsite and was getting questioned by the group, who had been eagerly waiting for news. When they heard about the existence of intelligent creatures, a large tribe with thousands of them in particular, they were shocked, and the atmosphere turned unexpectedly serious.

Human beings were an intelligent part of the universe, and deserved the title of the overlords of the Earth. Although humans were currently losing against the rampage of the mutated beasts, they still felt proud for being the only intelligent creature on Earth. Despite the fact that mutated beasts were stronger, when it came right down to it, they were mere beasts without any intelligence. If humans persisted enough, they would eventually win the war. However, this sudden news had crushed all their

pride.

It turned out that humans were no longer the only intelligent species on the Earth.

If a group of intelligent creatures stronger and wiser than human beings had showed up, how could humans maintain their pride? Perhaps the day of their replacement was not too far.

The news cast a chill over everyone.

“I can’t believe the world has changed so much!” Huang Jiahui said after a while. She looked as if she was in a trance.

The news Luo Yuan had brought had shocked them all. Although the various clues and traces they had seen along the way had somehow prepared them, the confirmation still made everyone panic.

“We must kill them all before they evolve!” Commander Xia suddenly said with a serious expression.

“Yes, they are too close to us. There might be a conflict at any time,” Huo Dong said as he tried to control his fear.

Luo Yuan nodded slightly and said, “It seems that we all have a similar idea. Let’s act tonight, and kill every single one of them. Everyone has to go.”



He had been pondering it on the way back and had changed his original plan. If the giants tried to escape in all directions, he would not be able to kill them all, no matter how fast he was.

Besides, they were not as weak as they used to be. They might not be able to fight one on one, but they could still work together and bring down a few of them. Wang Shishi might not be able to face green rank mutated beasts easily, but she could be a killing machine when facing blue rank mutated beasts. Her efficiency was even higher than Luo Yuan's. If she was around, he could most likely complete the mission.

“What about the kids?” Huang Jiahui asked.

“We'll bring them along too. It's safer than leaving them alone in the cave.” Luo Yuan clearly understood Huang Jiahui's worries. “You don't have to worry. You'll just take care of any of them that try to escape. It'll be very safe!”

The decision had been made, and nobody dared doubt or oppose it, even if they were feeling afraid or reluctant. They did not even dare express their emotions on their faces. Luo Yuan's authority was too deeply rooted into their hearts. Even the few soldiers that had just joined the group not long ago remained silent under his gaze. They felt that he had a stronger authority than their own senior official. The anticipation of the upcoming battle made them feel stressed, so they tried their best to prepare.

The apocalypse had stretched people to their limits. Even those

that used to be couch potatoes had transformed into true survivors after struggling for half a year.

...

Time passed by quickly, and soon the sky turned dark.

By the open space in front of the cave, a skinned mutated beast was being roasted, emitting a tempting aroma. Liquid fat dropped on the campfire, and sparks shot up, producing cracking sounds. The glimmering lights revealed everyone's worried, fearful faces.

“It’s burning!” Luo Yuan said.

They all snapped out of their reverie and fumbled to take the grilled meat off the barbeque stand. Obviously, they were still unsettled by their earlier shock.

Luo Yuan frowned, but he quickly relaxed his brows. To be honest, he had also been very shocked when he'd first seen those creatures. He had barely been able to control his urge to kill them. Even if there was no such mission, he would still have wanted to wipe them off. That urge seemed to have come out of nowhere and could be felt inside his bones and genetic material. Perhaps it was the natural instinct of an intelligent species that had just met another intelligent species.

Soon, they finished their dinner. Luo Yuan looked at the time and realized that it was already 7 p.m. The sky was already

completely dark, but he decided to wait for three more hours. At 10 p.m. sharp, he stood up, reached for his Zhanmadao and thrust it somewhere next to him.

“Put the fire out, and let’s go!”

The group put out the campfire, picked up their weapons silently, and got ready to go.

Huang Jiahui picked up a long sword, bent her head to check her watch, and then walked up to Luo Yuan. “It’s only 10 p.m. Isn’t it too early?” she whispered.

It was indeed early for humans during the apocalypse; the night was still young.

Luo Yuan shook his head. “That place is a long way from here, and we’ll have to go slower because it’s dark. If some kind of accident occurs, we’ll take even longer to get there. We need some extra time to react. Besides, those giants are not human. They should already be sleeping.” Luo Yuan took a look at her before he said softly, “Be careful. Better stay close to Wang Shishi.”

Huang Jiahui nodded as she said seriously, “Don’t worry about me. I will be.”

...

The team climbed up on the giant lizard and set off.

Roar after roars came from the distance, occasionally mixing with pained cries and growls, frightening them even more. Under the shade of the dense forest leaves, the tussock appeared completely dark. They could see pairs of glimmering lights on the shrub from afar. They were the eyes of mutated beasts hunting for prey. The large size of the giant lizard made them hesitate to go near them, though. They just kept wandering around the area.

At night, the forest was a more lively and dangerous place than during the day. Most carnivores were active during the night hours. Because of the high temperature they had been experiencing lately during the day though, some herbivores had also turned nocturnal in order to adapt to the harsh environment.

The giant lizard had to go slow, and it seemed impatient along the way. It could not help but roar a number of times. Although its roars were deafening, its size still kept them safe along the way.

Half an hour later, the group had finally reached the valley.

That place was not too far from the tribe of the giants. Luo Yuan had the group dismount from the giant lizard, because its movement would be too loud. In order not to alert the giants, they left it there while the rest of them walked.

It was very silent along the way, unexpectedly different from the atmosphere in the forest.

Maybe it was because of the frequent appearance of the giants,

but barely any mutated beasts were living in the area. As a result, they did not come across any dangers along the way.

Not long after, they saw the dim light of a fire. Its scorching heat made the temperature rise suddenly.

Lin Xiaoji wiped his sweat off. His body was completely covered, so the heat wave made him sweat profusely. He complained in a low voice, “Aren’t those mutated beasts afraid of the heat?”

“It’s a method to defend themselves. With the fire burning, no mutated beasts will dare come near. Some sentries far from the military base use this method too. A burning fire is more effective than any machine guns or cannons. It seems that these mutated beasts are smarter than we expected,” Commander Xia said with a serious expression.

Luo Yuan did not pay much attention to their conversation. He carefully listened to their surroundings for a while before he turned his head and said, “It seems that some giants are keeping watch. I’ll check the place out first. Follow me only when I give you the signal.”

Although the rest of them had not heard anything, no one doubted him. They looked shocked, and their faces had turned serious.

“Brother Luo, let me come with you and help!” Wang Shishi said suddenly.

Luo Yuan hesitated. It should be safer there, so they would not have a problem without Wang Shishi. Besides, it would be really difficult to kill several giants by himself without alerting the rest of them who would still be sleeping. Luo Yuan nodded. “Alright, come with me. I’ll need your help later on.”

Wang Shishi nodded her head in excitement.

They crouched as they walked forward slowly. It was getting hotter and hotter as they progressed, the heat almost burning their hair. After a while, Luo Yuan stopped and listened carefully. He pushed aside the dried grass, producing a soft rustling sound, but thankfully he did not attract any attention.

“Have you seen them? Can I see them, too?” Wang Shishi whispered. She was curious about how the mutated beasts looked.

“Shh!” Luo Yuan observed the area carefully. After a while, he turned to her and said solemnly, “There’s a total of 13 giants on guard. I didn’t expect this many. I’m afraid there might be trouble.”

A group of giants was sitting on the hillside randomly, occasionally checking their surroundings.

These giants were stronger and taller than the rest. Every single one of them was about seven meters tall, and their muscles were so big that they almost tore their skin apart. Although they were sitting randomly, they were still emitting a valiant aura. These were not common giants. They were warriors.

Suddenly, a rustling sound was heard from somewhere not far away. A giant stood up in alert and looked around, producing some weird sounds. It sounded as if it was communicating with the others. Then it took a long spear the size of a bowl and walked forward carefully while the others looked around them vigilantly.

These giants were extremely careful and vigilant. In fact, anyone living deep inside the forest with danger lurking in every direction would have done the same. If they did not, they would not have survived this far.

The giant carefully walked towards the source of the sound, surprised to find a dying mutated beast there with its stomach torn open and its guts dropping all over the place. A long trace of blood could also be seen. The most terrifying thing was that the giant did not know where it'd been heading or where it had come from. It was a huge surprise, indeed.

The giant licked its lip, revealing its two sharp tusks.

Even for a warrior like that giant, meat was precious and rare. They could not get it daily, because they had to risk their lives to find it. However, that did not affect how alert it was. It carefully checked around the area, and when it confirmed that there was no movement around, it excitedly picked up the mutated beast by its neck and walked back to where the other giants were.

As soon as the giants saw the mutated beast, there was an uproar. Their faces seemed to transform with happiness; one of them tore

open the beast's stomach, pushed its hand in and pulled out the heart, giving it to the strongest giant in respect.

The giant seemed very pleased. It showed a flicker of a ferocious smile as it put the heart into its mouth and bit it with its sharp teeth. As it chewed the heart, fresh blood dripped down the corner of its mouth, making it to look even more ferocious.

Maybe this was some kind of special etiquette or sign, because as soon as the giant swallowed the heart, a feeding frenzy began. The feeding giants looked extremely intense as they tore the beast into several parts and put them into their mouths to tear and bite. One impatient giant acted like a wild beast, which only proved that, although these giants were intelligent creatures, they were still pretty animalistic.



# Chapter 217: Chaotic

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For a normal human, a few hundred pounds of mutated beast might have been more than enough, but for a six-meter tall giant, it was only good for two or three portions. The problem was, there were 13 giants in total.

A feeding beast was a terrifying sight, but what was even more terrifying was a group of beasts facing a shortage of food.

At the beginning of their meal, the giants had been ferocious, yet vigilant. However, as the food became less and less, their feeding became increasingly frenzied, and they ended up plundering each other. By that time, all traces of alertness had long been forgotten.

The moonlight in the dark sky cast a red eerie glow against the foggy background.

Suddenly, there was a gust of wind. Heaps of fallen leaves could be seen swirling around. Amid the wind, a soft sound rustling could be heard.

The leader of the giants, who had been through countless battles and life-and-death situations, was more sensitive to danger. He felt that something was not right and instinctively lifted his head.

His pupils contracted and focused on a small human silhouette moving at phantom-like speed towards them. At first sight, the silhouette had still been ten meters away from them, but in the blink of an eye, it was suddenly in front of them. The giant was in a

state of shock, fear making its heart miss a beat.

Just as he was preparing to roar, a blinding silver light flooded its line of sight. It opened its mouth, but no sound came out. Instantly, a streak of blood extended from its cheekbone to its chin. Blood gushed out rapidly as its entire head was split into two.

The silhouette disappeared swiftly and reappeared near a new target. The attack just now had not slowed it down; it could easily travel four to five meters in just a single step. The intruder was dressed in black. In the darkness, they seemed to move like a shadow; akin to an incarnation of the Grim Reaper.

A gust of wind blew by, and the light from the sharp tip of the Zhanmadao emerged out of the shadows, piercing the glabella of another giant. The acute pain stunned the giant for a moment, who did not know what had hit it.

Although it seemed like a long time had passed since the silhouette had first appeared, in reality it had only been half a second from the moment it had leapt out of the bushes. The first giant's skull had only just been detached from its torso.

However, the rest of the giants were still unaware of this, fully immersed in their feeding frenzy as they were.

Three, four, five giants...

As time went by, the attacks were becoming increasingly

obvious. However, the strong wind and the splattering blood prevented the giants who noticed from alerting the others. The sabre would suddenly appear and slice off their skulls, or Wang Shishi's flying shuttle would pierce them.

The first corpse had only just dropped to the ground. The giant's body weighed almost a ton, and it smashed to the ground with a dull thud. The huge commotion had finally alerted the remaining three giants.

It was too late, though.

The speed of the shadow suddenly increased three-fold, hitting its limits.

The moment the first giant was about to take action, the shadow was already behind it. The giant picked up a spear, but a strike of the sharp sabre cut it in half in mid-air.

As the second giant watched the scene, its face betrayed its fear. It was about to shout, but before it could make a sound, the sharp edge of the sabre had stabbed through its mouth to the crown of its head.

The third giant had already been killed by the flying shuttle.

Seeing that all the giants had been taken care of, Luo Yuan let out a sigh of relief. He turned and looked at the strange-looking, rugged cliff. A zigzag path had been carved onto the rocks, leading

upwards until the edge of the cliff.

The slaughter had only just begun.

Luo Yuan could hear light footsteps behind him. He didn't have to turn his head to know it was Wang Shishi.

"Brother Luo, these giants were really easy to defeat," said Wang Shishi. There was a trace of both excitement and disappointment in her voice. That group of giants had seemed so imposing that they'd thought they'd be very powerful. They had not expected them to be this easy to defeat. They'd been far weaker than the beasts they'd come across.

"Intelligent creatures have never been known for their brute strength... Forget about it. You head back first and bring the others over here," Luo Yuan said before he let out a laugh. They really took everything too seriously, and now they were facing a precarious situation, trying to hold on for dear life. There was no point in thinking too much. As long as they were alive, there was still hope. Besides, Luo Yuan did not think human beings would perish that easily.

"Oh!" Wang Shi Shi replied glumly. Brother Luo's answer had obviously been half-hearted. She hated when people treated her like a child, especially when the person doing it was Brother Luo.

"This group of giants has chosen a good place to live, but there are two sides to everything. Although this place is easy to hold and hard to attack, when one is overpowered, they are pretty much

trapped. Unless they choose to jump off that cliff. You have to take care of all the giants that come down the cliff,” said Luo Yuan.

“Can we use our guns then?” Cao Lin said nervously.

“Yes, you can. Wait until the giants start to jump down, though. Then using a gun or not makes no difference anymore,” said Luo Yuan after some thought. “Well, let’s get ready. I will attack in half a minute.”

Suddenly, the group began to breathe fast. Their hearts were thumping non-stop, and their expressions had turned nervous. The adults looked better, because they had experienced something like this more than once. The children had turned pale, though.

This time, no one paid any attention to them.

Half a minute passed by in a flash. Luo Yuan took a deep breath, and then slowly exhaled. He picked up his Zhanmadao, crouched, and took a few steps before disappearing. Flexible as a cheetah, his steps were silent but unbelievably fast. He moved unhurriedly, although his speed was faster than the average sprinter. The distance was quickly reduced to mere inches, giving off an eerie feeling.

Within a few breaths' time, Luo Yuan had disappeared towards the cliff.

After a moment, a vague sound like a growl of pain was heard. It

sounded unreal, as if it was just an illusion. Beasts could be heard growling from somewhere around the area too. Suddenly, the sound became more frequent, and the faint stench of blood filled the air gradually.

One minute, two... Five...

Apart from that resonating nauseating sound, there had been no other movement in the area. The group looked at each other, their initial anxiety gradually loosening up.

Suddenly, a deafening roar was heard in the distance. Just as they'd heard it though, it was quickly muffled, perhaps by Luo Yuan himself. It was already too late, though.

Like a boiling pot of porridge, the whole cliff suddenly started to tremble. One by one, the giants gave out loud roars. From the depths of the cliff, giants could be seen rushing out. Soon, the passageway of the cliff was packed with them.

The roars and snarling of the countless giants sounded like the low rumbling of thunder. From afar, the whole scene looked like thousands upon thousands of horses and soldiers.

Intimidated by the sight, the group subconsciously started to retreat.

Commander Xia, who had survived the apocalypse, had been observing the expression on everyone's faces. Realizing that their

confidence had been affected, he shouted loudly, “We have Luo Yuan! The giants will not be able to reach us. We will only need to handle the injured giants at worst.”

Everyone relaxed slightly, but their eyes were still fixed up ahead. The situation was indeed under control. The giants were arranged in a meandering line, as if they'd been blocked by some invisible force. No matter how they charged at it, they were still beaten.

Limbs were tossed in the air, blood spattered around, and the reflective ray of the sabre produced a rainbow-like image.

One by one, the bodies of the giants fell heavily off the cliff, making a dull thud as they landed by the foot of the cliff.

Luo Yuan's eyes were cold, and his face was expressionless. He looked a killing machine. There were several giants collapsing on the ground every second.

Along with his improving skills and increasing number of battles, his moves had also become smoother. He used less fancy tricks, and each execution was calculated by the shortest distance, maximizing the force of the attack. His style was sophisticated, perfectly fitting the ergonomics of the human body. His every move and attack was measured precisely, without the slightest error, waste or excessive use of strength. His attacks combined both strength and beauty. They were swift and fierce like a storm, yet flitting like lightning. One could barely catch a glimpse of them.

In terms of his technique, the skill he had with his weapon had reached its peak. All he could do now was increase his strength and speed, as well as his spiritual power.

The path excavated by the giants was about five to six meters wide, and could easily fit eight or nine giants walking side by side. The weapons they used varied. There were spears made with mutated beast teeth and stones as big as washing basins. Some giants were even holding tree logs as thick as thighs.

Each passing minute, numerous weapons were being thrown at Luo Yuan, but each time there were giants collapsing, one by one. Regardless of how loud they roared or how fiercely they attacked, they could not deter him.

He even had some spare time to himself. While he was attacking, he was also kicking some of the bodies off the cliff to prevent them from piling up and blocking his way.

The Earth was constantly replenishing his physical strength, so he was not feeling tired. Although the giants were brave and ferocious, and not afraid to defend themselves, their strength was nothing against his. Batch after batch of giants charged at him with an angry expression on their faces, but they were all easily torn apart before they dropped dead to the ground.

A stream of blood mixed with crushed flesh, guts, and a disgusting foam had formed a pool and was seen slowly trickling down the path on the cliff. The strong stench of blood remained



stagnant in the air.

The killing spree had been going on for half an hour, but the number of giants had yet to reduce. They seemed to be endless. Luo Yuan gradually lost his patience and took a step back, retrieving a short spear from a fish-skin pocket and making a winding motion like the spine of a dragon. The next moment, a snapping sound was heard, and the air produced a blasting sound as the short spear shot out like a flash of lightning.

It instantly passed through the chest of a giant, leaving a large clear hole the size of a bowl in it. Then it went through a second one, a third one... The spear did not stop until it had gone through six giants.

This spear was not same one that Luo Yuan had used during the day to blow off the targets. This one was made from blue level wood he had specifically looked for that afternoon. That kind of wood was extremely sturdy and as compact as steel. It had an incredible penetrating power, and was highly effective against lower and medium-sized beasts.

Truth be told, the giants were not that weak compared to Luo Yuan. Plus, they were also armed. Their force could not match Luo Yuan's, though. That was because it was too crude. They were still using brute force, and could not even be compared to the average athlete.

In contrast, Luo Yuan unleashed force from his entire body, from his toes to his waist and his fingertips. Even his idle left hand was moving in harmony with the rest of his body. Eighty percent of his

body's muscles were working simultaneously, so his power could be unleashed fast and almost twice as hard as the giants'.

Luo Yuan's speed did not falter after the first shot. His hand was almost a blur by now. Shots were released from his hands one after the other like an automaton cannon. His killing efficiency had doubled fast, the giants falling and collapsing in rows.

In just a few seconds, the space ahead had been cleared up. Numerous giants could be seen collapsing to the ground, struggling and moaning as their eyes filled with fear and despair.

It was a complete massacre. Their fear of death and the huge casualties had finally brought the downfall of the giants. In a moment of despair, realizing they had no way to escape, some of the giants panicked and jumped off the cliff, landing heavily on the ground below and letting out deafening cries.

Luo Yuan was forty to fifty meters above. Although the giant's build could allow them to survive the jump, the fall would still cause some serious injuries to them. Plus, there was still Wang Shishi and the others down there, so none of them would be able to escape.

It was complete chaos.

# Chapter 218: Curse

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The giants fell to the ground and quickly ran away from Luo Yuan in fear. Those giants who fought had been killed by Luo Yuan, and the cowardly ones that had been left were trying to escape. Unfortunately, they were like rats in a small container. There was nowhere they could go.

In fact, the giants were quite similar to human beings. Maybe they were a new version of homo sapiens. In the end however, most of them were begging for mercy.

However, Luo Yuan did not reserve any kind of sympathy for those creatures. Mission requirement aside, Luo Yuan could not neglect the fact that they were a group of intelligent creatures. Human beings could not allow them to exist on the Earth. Humans would not allow any creatures that could potentially threaten their status to survive. Their surrender had only sped up their death.

Luo Yuan was covered in a thick layer of blood. His hair had been stuck in knots and none of them could see him clearly. Dark red blood was dripping along his hair, making him look like he'd tripped and fallen into a puddle of blood. His Zhanmadao was still shiny and free of any blood stains, though. There were corpses all over the ground, some of them still moaning. Luo Yuan walked along the passage on the cliff and stabbed a few of them who were still alive.

The battle had lasted for more than an hour. He massaged his forehead, feeling mentally tired. He suddenly realized something was wrong. He realized he was feeling very frustrated after killing

them. It was very difficult for him to focus. Sometimes, he even had hallucinations. He'd even had some when the giants had surrendered. Their fear and entreat had made him feel uncomfortable.

It was not that bad when he was fighting, because he was focused on something critical at the time, but it was terrible once he was in a relaxed state. It had not stopped yet. Luo Yuan knew something strange had to be happening inside his body. It felt like there was a form of energy causing changes to his soul. He leaned against the wall of the cliff and closed his eyes slightly to rest. After a while, he opened his eyes, looking very serious.

He realized he could not concentrate his Will anymore. He was too distracted by hallucinations whenever he attempted to concentrate. He took deep breaths repeatedly to calm himself down, but to no avail. He could not focus his mind. All his thoughts were confusing him. He felt worse than he had before he had discovered his Will.

He massaged his forehead, feeling annoyed. Subconsciously, he recalled something weird about the giants with the strange drawings on their bodies. Their physique had been normal and they'd looked skinny, but there had been many accessories on their bodies. Apparently, they'd had some kind of hierarchy in their village.

As he looked at the corpses on the ground, he suddenly thought of something. "Oh, sh\*t! Did they cast a spell on me?" Shocked, he realized there was a high possibility of that. Perhaps he would not have believed in such superstitions a long time ago, but he had

begun to believe ever since he'd realized mysterious things like the power of Will existed.

In fact, he himself possessed the power of killing, unlike the animals nearby, who just tried their best to escape, but instead fell to the ground or died whenever he concentrated his Will.

Those giants had not been like normal mutated beasts. They'd been a group of intelligent creatures. Their Will had been strong, and they'd probably had some kind of special mental power. Perhaps they had not been usually able to concentrate their Will, but had been able to concentrate it for a short time when it was the most powerful. Thus, it would not come as a surprise if they'd cast a spell on him.

He could only blame himself for getting cursed, He had been too careless and had underestimated them after all. Fortunately, his Will was strong enough to control himself, otherwise, he might have collapsed or died.

Although Luo Yuan speculated that he had been cursed, he did not actually care much about it. He refused to continue thinking about it, and he just ignored the hallucinations. The spell would fade in time anyway, and his Will would get stronger.

He looked through every single cave and found a few giants hiding there. Most of them were still young. He killed them all and quickly walked down the pathway after checking one last time.

Most of the giants who had jumped off the cliff have been killed

by Luo Yuan's team or died on landing. Considering that they weighed about 500 kilos, their bones would definitely have gotten fractured after jumping down from 40-50 meters high.

It had been very easy for his team to kill them. Luo Yuan even saw a few of the kids soaked in blood. Apparently, they had helped kill the giants as well. Their expressions reminded him of African Scouts.

“We can’t take care of them forever. It’s hard times, and it’s time for them to learn.” Commander Xia said quickly as he noticed Luo Yuan looking at the kids.

Luo Yuan looked very serious. He had just finished killing numerous giants, and his expression made most of them feel terrified.

“It’s good to see some blood.” Luo Yuan nodded. He did not really care. He believed that the strong would survive and the weak would be eliminated. Everyone had to adapt to the new reality if they wanted to stay alive.

“Brother Luo, do you want to clean the battlefield?” Huo Dong suggested with a smile. “This is a place where intelligent creatures lived. It's a very rare sight. Who knows, maybe we'll find something amazing.”

“Your call, but don’t expect too much out of it. Be here in 30 minutes and we will return to the base,” Luo Yuan said.

He had checked all the caves, but he had not found anything valuable except for wooden art craft. The most valuable things had been some leathers and oracles, but their quality had been relatively bad.

"Let's go and discover a different civilization! We might get some surprises!" Huo Dong tried to motivate them when he saw no one respond.

"I'm sure it's just corpses. I'm out." If Huang Jiahui felt disgusted by the smell of blood there, she was sure she was not going to enjoy what was up in the caves.

"I'm out, too! Yuck!" Wang Shishi said arrogantly.

Huo Dong felt awkward as he realized no one was willing to join him.

Suddenly, he suggested, "Actually we don't have to check out the caves. There must be a river nearby if so many giants were living here."

What he said made sense. "The river should be quite near. It would have been too dangerous for them to travel far away."

Everyone suddenly felt delighted. "You're right. There were a lot of them, so the water supply for their daily use must have been quite big. They would have already died if they hadn't had a steady water supply."

## Chapter 219: Wisdom Tree

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The hot weather made everyone sweat all the time, and there were so many of them that water consumption was tremendous. It was almost five to six times higher than usual. Although they had collected a few drops before by using leaves, the amount was limited and the process was very time-consuming. Plus, that water was only sufficient for survival, not for daily use.

The high temperature made everyone very uncomfortable when they did not shower for a whole day. If anyone fell sick under those conditions, he or she would have to struggle to survive. It was very risky and unreliable to collect water that way. If there was any strong wind at night, or the leaves were destroyed by mutated beasts, it would be a disaster. Finding a steady source of water had become the biggest problem the team was facing.

This time, even Luo Yuan had lost his patience. While he was walking around, he was also sniffing the air, carefully analyzing the moisture level in it. Humid air often carried a mist while dry air smelled of soil. Considering his powerful skill, it was not difficult for Luo Yuan to tell if there was mist in the air or somewhere in the distance.

He closed his eyes, followed the airflow that contained the most concentration of humidity, and listened. Everyone looked at Luo Yuan's strange actions and expression, but no one dared disturb him. That was the first time Luo Yuan had showed his Sensory Perception skill in public. Luo Yuan was very concentrated. Even if there had been a system notification then, he would have promptly ignored it.



"The water source should be somewhere around here. I seem to hear the sound of water!" Luo Yuan shouted loudly as he suddenly opened his eyes. His whole face had lightened up.

He walked towards the cliff up ahead right away, everyone quickly following him. After walking along the cliff for about one hundred meters, everyone could vaguely hear the sound of flowing water. The sound was indistinct. If they didn't pay close attention, they could hardly hear it. They suddenly realized that the gap between Luo Yuan and themselves was huge. Normal people could hardly hear if someone was shouting from a hundred meters away, let alone be able to hear the soft sound of flowing water.

They continued to walk for another ten meters. The sound of the water was getting louder. Some of them could already see the pond in the reflection of the moonlight.

Spring water was flowing out from half a meter high from the cliff into the pond. The pond was not big. It was about three to four square feet, but the water kept flowing, and it looked very clean and clear.

"Spring water! That's great!" Cao Lin shouted in surprise. She seemed to lose control of her emotions as her body trembled slightly.

"It's so clean! I think it must be sweet," Zhao Yali said, also looking excited.

These days, after the exhaustion of all water sources near the camp, everyone had been drinking sewage. When they mixed it with the soup, it was almost edible, but when they drank it directly, the water mixed with the odor of corpses and soil and tasted really disgusting. When they saw the crystal clear spring water, they were all ecstatic.

Even Mu Wenwen, who never expressed many emotions and always lived in her own world, couldn't hide her joy and smile. The moment she expressed her feelings, the mysterious power surrounding her somehow broke. Several people looked at her subconsciously, stunned by her beauty. All this while, no one had noticed what a stunning woman Mu Wenwen was. She was slightly shocked, and seemed uncomfortable with the attention she was getting from everyone. She quickly changed back to her normal, expressionless face. Several of them remained stunned for a while, but were quickly distracted by something else. Luo Yuan was also distracted by this mysterious power. Suddenly, he switched his focus and saw a black shadow somewhere in the distance. He was both shocked and surprised.

It was a tree.

It was an unusual sight considering that the giants had cut all the trees near their home. There had been nothing left except for some grass, so seeing a lone tree about seventy to eighty meters away was an eye-catching sight.

The roots of the tree were thick and bulky. Most of them were exposed, and they were knotted with each other, forming the shape of a ball. They looked just like giant cobras tangled together.

When Luo Yuan looked through the gap between the roots, he realized it was actually growing on a ten-meter high rock. As the roots grew, the rock cracked, but it still managed to maintain its original shape, because the roots were keeping it together.

Compared to the tree's huge roots, its trunk was relatively small. It was about eight to nine meters high with sparse leaves, and there were several pieces of fruit hanging on its branches. After the end of the world, most plants had mutated and rarely reproduced anymore, so Luo Yuan felt curious when he saw the fruit on that tree.

"Everyone stay here. Let me go and take a look," he said.

Apparently, it was not a normal mutated plant. He could see many bones scattered around its roots, looking creepy under the moonlight. He told Huang Jiahui and the others about what he had just seen and warned them not to go any closer, no matter what happened. Then he took the Zhanmadao with him and walked towards the tree.

He stopped at a spot seven to eight meters away from it. The area in front of him was full of bones. Most of them were bones of mutated beasts, there were also some bones that belonged to giants. This tree looked too mysterious. Other than its roots, its trunk was also in a weird shape. It was greatly distorted, as if the entire trunk had been wrung like a towel into a spiral shape.

Although the tree did not seem dangerous, Luo Yuan did not go closer. The nature of plants made mutated trees the most patient hunters. Most of the time, they looked just like normal plants, but

when they hunted, they showed their ugliest side.

Luo Yuan used his mind to exude a strong force field. The air seemed to have solidified, and the entire area felt oppressive. While he exuded the force field, he carefully observed the tree.

When the blade of the Zhanmadao had advanced to expert level, his momentum had gotten quite strong. Even light green level mutated beasts would have been shocked by it, but the tree didn't move. It looked just like a normal plant.

Luo Yuan still had his doubts. He hesitated for a while before he started walking forward slowly. The bones under his foot were very fragile, and they produced a breaking sound as he stepped on them.

His Sensory Perception was like a radar, scanning everything around him, including the tree's roots under the ground. He held the handle of the sabre tight and tensed up his muscles. His every step generated force. If the tree attacked him, he would be ready to fight back.

Still, he was getting more doubtful as he got closer. All indications showed that the tree was harmless to humans and animals. Even when he stood in front of it and touched its trunk, the tree still did not react.

"If this tree is really a normal plant, how come there are so many bones here?" Luo Yuan picked up a bone gently, but it was too fragile to break. "These bones are too fragile. Even a wooden stick

before the mutation outbreak would have been stronger than this. Apparently, all nutrition inside it must have been lost."

Luo Yuan used the Zhanmadao to cut down a palm-sized piece of bark from the tree. A blood-like liquid slowly flowed out while an unusual aroma spread out gradually.

He picked up the tree bark and performed identification on it.

"Wisdom Bark"

"Rarity: Blue"

"Weight: 300g"

"Properties: None"

"Additional Abilities: None"

"Remarks: This is a rare piece of Wisdom Tree bark. There is Knowledge in every wild Wisdom Tree, whose value cannot be measured. This piece of tree bark is most likely a good sample. "

Luo Yuan was startled for a while. When he came back to his senses, he looked up at the fruit and brought one down to perform identification on it.

"Wisdom Fruit"

"Rarity: Blue"

"Weight: 100g"

"Properties: None"

"Additional Abilities: Wisdom Generation"

"Remarks: This is a rare Wisdom Tree fruit that can slightly stimulate brain development to generate wisdom. Valid for creatures with Intelligence level under 11."

His face darkened, and he felt heavy-hearted.

"Why is there such a mutated tree? And this fruit? Is it natural evolution, or has it been deliberately arranged by some mysterious force?"

In fact, Luo Yuan had always had a feeling that this mutation outbreak had been targeting mankind. Animals, insects, even plants could evolve. Only humans were unable to. It felt like there was some mysterious force trying to suppress or eliminate mankind.

From a biological perspective, humans and other creatures were not that different. Even mice were 80% genetically identical to

humans and shared 99% of the same genes with them. When it came to primates, their genes were almost exactly the same as humans'.

Those days, though, primates could evolve while humans were still pretty much the same. Only a handful of individuals had been able to evolve by consuming the flesh and blood of other mutated beasts and unlocking their powers. Reality was too cruel. Mankind seemed to have been forgotten by nature. There was no evolution. All they could do was just struggle to survive.

"I'm afraid that this is being arranged by some mysterious force. Their purpose must be to support another race and replace humans," Luo Yuan thought doubtfully.

He looked at the fruit in his hand as if it was evil. He pressed and pinched it until pink pulp was flying everywhere. The air suddenly filled with a seductive fragrance. Luo Yuan looked at the tall Wisdom Tree again before he flashed out his Zhanmadao and started chopping it.

Things had changed.

As time passed slowly, he stood there like a stone without moving. Eventually, he slowly put the sabre back into its sheath and looked at the corpses on the ground.

# Chapter 220: Illusion And Hypnosis

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The sun slowly rose in the horizon and the fog lifted in the forest. A new day had begun.

On a piece of open grassland, a gigantic monster was holding a giant corpse in its mouth, walking towards the strange tree. The area around the tree was full of corpses. They were piling up like a hill, covering almost the whole tree.

These corpses were nothing. There were even more bodies by the entrance of the cliff, waiting for the monster to move them.

The high intensity and repetitive activity together with the high volume of the corpses were already making the violent monster impatient. Occasionally, it would do something to release its frustration, like tear the dead bodies apart and swallow them down to its stomach.

Of course, it would not do that frequently. Most of the time, it was very well-behaved and carried out its daily job carefully. It had had a few bloody lessons before, but its horrible owner was not there at the moment.

Sometimes, when the monster dropped the corpses on the ground, it would stare at the fruit on the tree as if there was something attractive about them, but it never went near them.

The soil around the strange tree had been soaked deeply by the blood of the corpses, and the air was filled with the strong smell of



blood. Some kind of translucent silk like mycelium seemed to have been awakened by the bloody smell. Since three in the morning, they had started to stretch out from the roots of the tree and wrap tightly around the corpses.

When the silk-like mycelium started to eat the corpses, the thread on the trunk crept slightly in yellow and purple colors. From afar, it looked like the trunk was rotating.

Inside a cave, somewhere in the middle of the cliff, there was a heavy snoring sound that sounded like it was being played by an orchestra.

After being busy the whole night, everyone was exhausted and had fallen asleep early.

There was nothing much to do early in the night, but they started to get busy later. They needed to clean up their new camp and throw all the giants' corpses down from the passage of the cliff.

In such hot weather, if they were to leave the corpses unattended, they would get smelly and rotten and attract a variety of insects and parasites. No one wanted to sleep near smelly, rotten corpses in their new camp.

The giants were not light by any means. They were about five to six meters tall and really burly. Each of them weighed almost a ton, so it was impossible for just one person to move a body. It took at least two or more people to even push one.

When all their hard work was over, everyone was completely exhausted. As soon as they were done cleaning up the corpses, they immediately fell asleep. Even Luo Yuan, who had a superhuman physique, felt a little tired. However, instead of going to sleep, he opened up the system log.

"Current Mission: D Level Special Mission: Destroy the Giant Tribe and kill all intelligent creatures in it."

"Note: This is a special task. The actual difficulty has been decreased by one level."

"Time Limit: None"

"Task Status: Completed"

"Evaluation: Excellent"

"Name: Luo Yuan"

"Completion: 100%"

"Basic Experience Bonus + 9,600 \* 100%"

"Rating: Excellent, Experience + 9,600 \* 100%"

"Experience: 5,520/153,600"

“Battle Beast: Giant Lizard”

“Completion: 0%”

“Basic Experience Bonus + 9,600 \* 0%”

“Rating: None, Experience + 4,800 \* 0”

“Experience: 1,140/19,200”

“You have upgraded!”

Luo Yuan was stunned for a while. He was both happy and surprised. He had not expected an upgrade, but two consecutive, perfectly completed D-level tasks had increased his experience and led directly to one. It was a pleasant surprise that even lightened the burden of the curse he had suffered.

He hastened to open the properties panel and look at the extra attribute point and five skill points. He could not help but laugh. It took him five whole minutes to calm down.

When he finally did, he closed his eyes and scowled, his face looking slightly serious.

“In the past, whenever I upgraded, I did not seem to cause me such a big mental fluctuation. It seems like the existence of the

curse is greatly affecting my Will. A part of my Will is being restricted by the curse, and once there is a trigger, my emotions get out of control."

"This issue cannot be ignored anymore. It should be resolved as soon as possible, otherwise I might end up doing something shameful in the future." Luo Yuan's expression darkened as he imagined a scene where he humiliated himself in front of everyone and lost his prestige.

He tried to stay calm and opened up the properties panel again. He looked at all the properties, but they seemed to be fairly distributed. Other than the bonus of the "Earth Stomp" and the "Heart of the Ghost Tree", his Strength, Dexterity and Physique were all 14 points. On the sub-property front, other than his Will, which was 15 points, all other properties were at 13 points. However, that was not a big issue. He already had his own plans for Intelligence. Perhaps there would be a breakthrough after that round.

What he couldn't decide was whether to allocate his extra point to Dexterity or Will.

Considering that he was cursed, if he allocated the point to Will, the curse would be suppressed or even dissipated. However, Will was already a very high property, and he always improved it with his personal breakthroughs.

Thus, it seemed a bit of a waste to allocate that point to Will.

"I would rather spend some more time cursed. If I'm able to kill so many creatures, I don't believe I won't be able to break a curse." Luo Yuan smiled as he made a decision.

He upgraded Dexterity to 15 points.

As his body heat quickly subsided, he slowly opened his eyes. His surroundings had become more quiet. Even the sound of snoring seemed like a melody. The world suddenly seemed to move half a beat slower, as if he had entered a faster time dimension.

He opened his palm to feel the air, and it somehow felt in closer contact with his skin. He could clearly sense that it was harder than before. It had a flowing texture to it as he squeezed slightly, letting it scatter from his fingers and fly everywhere. He suddenly seemed to be able to catch it, so that's exactly what he did.

He clenched his fist, producing a popping sound. The air around his fist felt agitated and turbulent, as if it had just exploded because of his pinch.

His 15-point Dexterity was 7.5 times higher than ordinary people's. The average person walked 7.5 times slower. All physical phenomena in that time dimension began to reveal their essence to him. It was as if Luo Yuan was watching a film. Everything was demonstrated in front of him in a more realistic and clear manner.

He stood up and walked out of the cave. He did not realize that his speed was already the equivalent of an ordinary person's jogging speed.

The world outside seemed a little strange. Dust fell slowly in front of him, the branches shook slightly in the breeze, and the thick air that surrounded him made him feel like he had jumped out of the world and was looking at everything as an outsider.

Obviously, he would need some time to get used to the side-effects of his high Dexterity. This time the effects were stronger, so it would be even more difficult to adjust than before.

Once Luo Yuan had slightly adapted to the feeling of his high Dexterity, he started to plan how to lift the curse.

He sat cross-legged, his eyes slightly closed, trying to get his mind to calm down completely.

However, even these simple actions seemed particularly difficult for him now. The curse caused all sorts of horrible hallucinations to form in his mind whenever he closed his eyes.

Dying people screaming, blaming gazes, ferocious roars... All kinds of horrible images appeared one after the other. Of course, those things had no big impact on Luo Yuan, but they seriously interfered with his peace of mind. He felt just like a man who was ready to fall asleep, but was suddenly awoken by a high pitch speaker playing beside his ears.

Luo Yuan tried to calm down for a long time, but failed and ended up getting even more upset. If he took it too lightly, he could probably shield himself from external interferences, but the curse

was deeply planted inside his soul, so calming down was not as easy as he'd originally thought.

He stood up and walked back and forth for a while. When he started to calm down, he sat down crossed-leg once again.

He knew that this was a fight against his own spirit and Will. If he gave up, he would also lose the fight.

He thought for a moment, but this time he did not rush. Instead, he amused himself by watching his hallucinations.

He found that the hallucinations caused by the curse were very simple. They were mostly short-screen, the picture rather blurred and fleeting. Of course, there were also longer scenes and pictures that were relatively clear. Apparently, human Will got stronger when humans were about to die.

The longest hallucination lasted no more than a second before it changed quickly to another one.

In less than ten minutes, Luo Yuan had already watched them all. When he was finished, he went on to watch them a second time, a third one, a fourth one...

Every time he watched them very carefully. By the fifth time, he had already figured out the underlying law of these hallucinations and was able to memorize the sequence and content of each scene.

He found that the effect of the curse was actually quite mechanical and rigid, like some sort of standard procedure.

If the human brain was a computer, then the curse would be the virus overloading the computer. If the virus burned the motherboard, the computer, or in this case the human, would die. If the virus caused a system crash, then the human would be driven to madness. Even the smallest impact would slow down the speed of the computer and affect its performance. Luckily, Luo Yuan was strong, so he was only suffering a decline in his performance.

He opened his eyes to rest for a while before he continued watching the hallucinations.

He watched them a fifth time, a sixth time, a seventh time... It was like entering a magical world. He kept watching the scenes carefully, even after he had memorized them and was able to describe them in detail.

He was getting tired, an indescribable boredom rising from the bottom of his heart.

He did not want to watch anymore.

The hallucinations were still playing in his mind, but he was too familiar with every scene and detail. It felt like he was being hypnotized. He was able to ignore them now. There was no fluctuation in his mind anymore, he had calmed down completely.



He had finally achieved peace of mind.

# Chapter 221: The Bird

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Luo Yuan was surprised that he had made it. He was overjoyed, but he managed to calm down fast. He tried to concentrate his Will, but it was difficult for him because too many thoughts were creeping into his mind.

Suddenly, there was a conflict between the hallucinations and the curse that made him feel as if his soul was exploding.

Luo Yuan tried to resist it for a few seconds, but he failed and withdrew from his meditating state. He opened his eyes and gasped. When he closed them again to investigate though, he realized he had consumed a lot of his energy and the hallucinations were already fading.

Luo Yuan thought he might need to do the same thing five or six more times in order to get rid of the curse. Perhaps it would even take a shorter time, because as the hallucinations faded, he could release a more powerful version of his Will.

Just as he was about to continue his self-treatment, he heard a roaring sound.

Luo Yuan had no time to think. He just grabbed his Zhanmadao and disappeared into the cave. He thought the sky looked strange as he walked out of the corridor and saw two giant green birds lingering in the sky. Their huge wings seemed to be covering the entire sky.

The awful smell of blood and corpses had attracted the mutated beasts. There were two of them. The giant lizard looked tense and kept roaring and jumping, trying to hop or catch the birds. However, Luo Yuan knew the giant lizard well enough to know that the birds were definitely more powerful. They were able to fly after all.

“Their target has to be the corpses of the giants. We are not necessarily in danger. There are too many corpses here, though. What are we supposed to do if they come back every day? Besides, there are two pieces of wisdom fruit around. We will definitely be in danger if they eat it,” Luo Yuan thought.

The mutated birds had been lingering for a long time and they seemed to be losing their patience. The bigger one suddenly shrieked, producing a high-pitch sound.

The smaller one was still flying in the sky, looking extremely alert. Suddenly, the bigger bird pulled its wings to its sides and rushed down from the sky like an arrow released from the bow. It was obviously going for the corpses, but it had not noticed that there was a tiny shadow jumping off the cliff while it was still flying in the sky.

"Damn it!" After jumping, Luo Yuan realized he could not concentrate his Will enough to slow down the movement of the air like he'd used to.

He quickly glanced around him, trying to find something he could grab onto. He could not find anything, not even a piece of vine. There were about 60-70 meters between the place he'd

jumped from and the ground. Even an iron disc would get disfigured upon landing.

“I will survive, I guess. If I don't, it will definitely be a very stupid way to die,” he laughed at himself.

The wind was blowing his way as he got closer to the ground. Luo Yuan, however, did not seem panicked.

He realized his landing speed was not that fast, and he seemed to be able to react fast.

Ten more meters...

He took a deep breath and adjusted his body so he could land vertically.

Five meters...

He extended his body and stretched his feet, bending his knees.

One meter...

Both his hands covered his head as he relaxed his body muscles. Suddenly, an intense force hit his feet, and he immediately pulled them back. The force traveled to his knees, his waist and the rest of his body. He used his muscles to resist against the force, rolling several times on the ground and quickly got up and ran. He had not

gotten hurt at all.

Ever since his Dexterity had been upgraded to 15 points, he could run faster than ever. He was as fast as a train. Even the grass shook when he passed by. He could run 100 meters in just a couple of breaths.

At the same time, the giant bird landed on the ground, its claws stabbing into the chest of one of the corpses. It was about to fly away when suddenly Luo Yuan's legs showed immense strength. He took a big leap, up to seven meters high, and quickly grabbed his spear and threw it towards the giant green bird.

Both the spear and the chest of the bird were damaged. There was a very big hole on the creature's chest, and Luo Yuan could hear a bone-cracking sound coming from the bird. It seemed like a very serious injury that could possibly lead to death.

The bird moaned in pain and collapsed on the ground hopelessly.

The giant lizard, which had stepped back earlier, quickly rushed towards the bird and bit its neck. After a few seconds, the head and body of the bird had been split into two. The giant lizard took the bird's head and ran towards Luo Yuan. It looked like it was trying to ask for a treat for its contribution.

The birds must have been a couple. The second one was trying to come down and save its companion, but it flew back into the sky when the giant lizard split its partner into two.

“How stupid! I could have killed both of them!” Luo Yuan was mad at the lizard.

However, when he looked at it, he realized he should not blame it. It had been working quite hard recently after all, and to be fair, it was not as smart as a human.

He raised his chin and looked up at the sky. The second bird was still lingering there, moaning in grief. It was still there even after an hour.

Luo Yuan became furious. He knew mutated beasts took revenge, but he wished the bird had gotten its lesson, otherwise he would be in trouble in the future. It would be definitely dangerous if the bird saw him as an enemy. Actually, Luo Yuan was not afraid of the bird, but he was worried about the safety of his team members.

## Chapter 22: Salt Ores

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The loud noise had woken everyone up. They quickly grabbed their weapons and rushed up to Luo Yuan. None of them felt calm when they saw the giant green bird, which was still lingering in the sky.

“What happened?” Huang Jiahui asked as she looked at the bird.

“I’m in trouble, I killed its mate,” Luo Yuan told her honestly. Then he added with a very serious expression, “We have to be careful the next few days. I’m worried the bird might attack us.”

Every once in a while, the bird blocked the sun with its wings as it flew in a specific pattern. The strong wind made everyone feel stressed and anxious.

“Brother Luo, do you have a solution for this?” Huo Dong asked carefully.

“I could kill it, but I can’t do it as long as it stays in the sky.” Luo Yuan stopped talking for a second before he added, “We could lure it down.”

Perhaps the strange giant bird had been lingering around for too long and had finally lost its patience, because it suddenly lowered its entire body close to the ground and moved its wings vigorously. A very strong gust of wind was produced, and the whole area looked like it was being attacked by a typhoon. Everyone felt uncomfortable opening their eyes as sand and stones flew in the

air.

Just as Luo Yuan thought the giant bird was about to attack them, it suddenly flew away, turned to a tiny spot in the sky, and disappeared.

"Finally, it went away!" Cao Lin sighed in relief.

"It can't be that easy. Like Brother Luo said, most mutants have a strong revenge instinct. Although they escape when they get injured, they come back for revenge when they recover," Commander Xia said.

"Worst case scenario, we'll have to fight a big group of mutants. Some high-level mutated beasts live in groups. Please be alert. It'll be crucial in the next few days," Commander Xia said with a very serious expression.

Although he was not physically strong, he was the most experienced frontline commander among them.

Luo Yuan nodded and said, "You're absolutely right. Although the possibility is low, we should always assume the worst. Please avoid going out in the upcoming days. Get enough water and food in advance."

Luo Yuan never underestimated the intelligence of mutated beasts. They could always do something far beyond human expectation. Plus, as long as there was something like the Wisdom



Tree in the world, Luo Yuan could not ensure that humans were more intelligent than mutants.

Although the giant bird was about 30 meters wide when it extended both its wings, it only weighed about a couple of tons, which was about the same weight as a giant. That was the weakness of the birds compared to land animals.

The dead bird was carried away after being chopped into numerous pieces by Luo Yuan. Luo Yuan found out it was a light green mutated beast after using identification on it. That was the first time he had collected so many high-quality feathers.

The system seemed to be no longer attracted to that level of creature, because Luo Yuan had not heard a single beep from it. He smiled awkwardly as he realized it would be really difficult for him to upgrade now.

Everyone was exhausted, but they knew it was very important to stay alert in the forest.

After carrying the carcass of the giant bird, they went to the pond nearby to take water, and then poured it into the big pit the giants had dug inside the cave.

They had enough firewood, because the giants had kept a lot stored inside the cave. The firewood was all dried up because of the hot weather, but the supply they had would be enough to sustain them until they died if they only used it for cooking.

They had gathered everything they needed in just two hours' time. Their supplies could last them for half a month. None of them felt uneasy, although everyone had gone through a very difficult time. Someone living in a peaceful world would never understand how much those people had struggled to stay alive during the end of the world. It was a situation that made everyone feel extremely insecure.

Their ultimate goal was to protect themselves whenever there was something strange happening. They had already gotten used to that kind of lifestyle, and those who had not been able to adapt had died.

Luo Yuan was the only one in the mood to look around their new home. The cave was huge. It was obvious that many giants had been living inside it.

It was actually the biggest cave on the cliff. Apparently, the giants who had been staying there must have had a higher status than the rest. The cave was six meters tall, and its surface area was about 1,000 square meters, and was supported by 24 three-meter diameter pillars.

There were many signs of digging and marks made by axes or other kinds of weapons. It was unbelievable that those giants, who had been born less than two years ago, had been able to build such an amazing home.

There was some scribbles on the wall that might have been an ancient language or just a bunch of unfamiliar signs. None of them could understand what it was exactly, and none of them were

interested in finding out.

Other than that, Luo Yuan found lots of ancient tools made of wood and stones, as well as a few animal teeth. Most of them were from the light green level beasts, so they did not attract his attention. Unlike modern humans, that primitive civilization did not show any specialty in anything.

“Hey, look! What’s this?” Wang Xianguang suddenly said.

Luo Yuan quickly walked over to her. It was a grayish rock with numerous crystals. One of its sides was smooth and shiny. Wang Xianguang had already knocked on it with her knife before Luo Yuan could identify it. She picked up the tiny grayish rock and put it into her mouth after licking it.

“Gosh! Take it out! Are you crazy?” Luo Yuan was in panic as he quickly pressed on her mouth to push the crystal out.

“Let go, you're hurting me! It's salty! It’s just salt!” Wang Xianguang was struggling, but she refused to puke the rock out. Luo Yuan had not really used much force on her.

“What? Salt?” Luo Yuan said.

He quickly squatted down and used identification.

"A salt ore, also known as rock salt."

“Ingredients: Sodium Chloride 70%, Magnesium Chloride 15%, Calcium Chloride 11%, Calcium Carbonate 3%.”

“Remarks: This is a big impure rock of salt.”

Some of them had already taken a piece and stuffed it into their mouths. Huang Jiahui was also one of them, even though she was usually very alert. Their actions made Luo Yuan want to try it as well.

They had run out of salt almost a week ago. They used to get salt by drinking mutated beast blood. However, the hot weather had been making them sweat a lot and lose all the sodium in their bodies. Some of them were dehydrated and eager for salt.

It was normal for them to behave like that upon finally finding some. They were like beggars with a loaf of bread after starving for a few days. Luo Yuan was the only one who could still control himself because he hardly sweated.

# Chapter 223: Private Training

Insignia Editor: - -

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Without being properly purified and refined, rock salt tasted awful! It was very bitter once the salt melted in the oral cavity. They were excited to try it at first but very soon no one wanted to consume it anymore. In the afternoon, they began to start a fire for cooking. They grounded the rock salt into tiny pieces and cooked it in boiling water.

Most of them in the group had gone to high school before and had acquired basic knowledge on the salt purification process during their chemistry experiments. Although some did not remember the exact procedures, everyone contributed their knowledge and memory to get it done. A layer of white salt appeared in front of them after repeated filtration and crystallization. They carefully moved the white salt into a stone bowl.

The group was very excited with their small achievement and continued to cook until the sky turned dark. There was about 20 kg of salt made at the end of the day, which could last for a very long time. Despite all that cooking, there was still a big piece of unprocessed rock salt leftover which could possibly last for 4-5 years if they cooked and processed it into white salt.

The weird giant bird did not appear throughout the day. Everyone felt relieved and they convinced themselves that the giant bird had learned not to mess with them from its dead partner.

After having a simple dinner, Luo Yuan tried to break the curse again and hoped to release his will once more. His will is too vital for him as it plays a very important role in generating his powers. His attacking and defensive abilities would decline if he could not gather his will and that will put them in a more dangerous situation, especially in the jungle.

Luo Yuan woke up before dawn the next day feeling slightly exhausted. He only managed to enter a meditative state once over the entire night. The only positive thing was that the curse was getting weaker and the illusions were slowly fading. Based on his own estimations, the curse would be broken naturally in another three to four days. He then looked at his watch and realized there was about two to three hours to sunrise, however, he did not feel sleepy at all as his 14-points physique was well rested. He then decided to get up.

"Ahh!!! Who is that?" Zhao Yali was frightened as she saw a shadow nearby. She was in a simple outfit with one of her snowy white shoulders exposed. Her small mouth was slightly opened and Luo Yuan was captivated by her juicy pink lips.

"It's me!" Luo Yuan quickly replied. She could not see him as she could not see much in the dark.

"Why are you still awake?" Luo Yuan asked.

"You scared me! I was wondering who it could be." Zhao Yali felt relieved as she recognized his voice. She then said, "I couldn't sleep."

She hardly addresses him as "Little Yuan" anymore as she could not interact with him like how she used to.

"Since we can't sleep, let's talk then." Luo Yuan said.

"About what?" Zhao Yali asked as she felt a bit uneasy.

"Anything." Luo Yuan thought and continued, "Let's talk about your life before this."

Zhao Yali remained silent and the atmosphere became a bit awkward, however, she was not a tough person and hence she could not really hate a person. She was happy as she saw Luo Yuan stand awkwardly and shyly - especially since he is such a strong and well-respected person now.

Zhao Yali was trying to reflect on the past but her mind was basically just thinking about a lot of nonsense. She hesitated and said, "Nothing interesting, it's over. Why don't you teach me how to properly use a sword? I think there are many steps that I am not doing correctly."

"Sure!" Luo Yuan said and continued, "Let's go outside then."

"Sure." Zhan Yali did not think too much and followed Luo Yuan out after getting her weapon in the dark. The surrounding outside was dark and she began to feel scared. She asked, "Why do we need to go so far away?"

"Because it won't be good if we woke the rest up. We will probably be very noisy." Luo Yuan whispered.

"I think it's far enough. If we lower our voices, I don't think they can hear us." Zhao Yali whispered softly and suddenly her face turned rosy.

Luo Yuan looked around to make sure they were at least seven to eight meters away from the rest and then said, "Alright, let's practice here then. Show me all your basic skills first then I'll correct your mistakes."

As she saw Luo Yuan being very calm about it, she felt relieved and said, "Alright, but please don't laugh at me."

"I won't laugh if you don't do something stupid." He was trying to joke with her.

"You're awful!" She said. Zhao Yali suddenly realized it has been a long time since they last spoke in such a relaxed manner. It has probably been 2 years, but it felt like a lifetime. She quickly recovered from her realization and began to practice.

She was not as shy as what she had expressed earlier. Since she evolved, her power and speed have already grown stronger and faster than Lin Xiaoji's. Her strength is still developing and no one knows how strong she could be.



Of course, there were flaws in her movements and postures, as well as the ways she uses her muscles. However, she was not the only one who had these issues. It was a breakthrough for her to transform from a weak lady to a strong person. She had put in a lot of effort behind the scenes.

Luo Yuan felt grateful to see her improvements. She began to evolve since the death of Lao Huang. However, Luo Yuan did not realize it then and he knew he did not really show her enough care and concern.

"Alright, it's the end of your warm up. Now, show me the first posture for the first action and then remain stationary. I'll point out your flaws." Luo Yuan said after seeing her practice a few times. She was even gasping a bit at that point.

The first action was the most powerful one. It was the 'chopping' action. Zhao Yali lifted both of her hands with the knife and remained still.

"Your arms must be lifted as high as possible... Higher! Only then can you fully utilize your strength to make a powerful attack!" Luo Yuan walked towards her and corrected the position of her arms while explaining.

The contact he made on her arms caused her to tremble slightly and her face turned hot. However, she just ignored those emotions as they used to have that kind of close contact before.

"And then the waist. Your waist is too stiff and unnatural." Luo

Yuan naturally touched her waist by inserting his hand into her shirt and his palm was busy exploring the surface of her skin to find the spot of muscles that she had to use.

Her skin was so much smoother after she evolved which made Luo Yuan enjoy this lesson a lot. Zhao Yali began to feel hot and her face became even more rosy. She was a bit angry and ready to scold him but hesitated.

Luo Yuan tried to be serious again when he realized she was about to scold him, "Yes! This part of your muscles... feel it... and then check mine."

She bit her lip and remained silent. She looked at Luo Yuan suspiciously but he acted very seriously.

"Your legs! You have not mastered the right standing position! That's the first step! It's so important to get the right footing and it will depend on the speed of your attack." Luo Yuan explained.

He then squatted down and touched her thighs, "You didn't use these muscles just now, practice this again later."

He seemed to have touched a sensitive spot and it caused her to gasp! She felt her body turning numb and said, "I'm feeling tired, I'm going back to rest."

"It's not done yet." Luo Yuan replied instantly.

At this point, Zhao Yali understood his true intentions and pushed him away. She then said, "Another day then. I'm not... I'm not ready today."

Luo Yuan quickly grabbed her into his arms and said gently, "I've already been captivated by you the first time I met you, but you were someone else's fiancé so I could not pursue you. Finally, I had the chance to spend a night with you after the apocalypse which was unforgettable. Believe it or not, you occupy a special place in my life."

"What's so good about me? I'm just a weak abandoned woman." Zhao Yali bit her lip and asked.

"I have no idea, but you just make me want to protect you so badly." Luo Yuan continued, "You don't know how charming you are."

"I don't believe you." Zhao Yali said.

"I mean it. Otherwise, I wouldn't have killed so many people that day just to save you." Luo Yuan said.

Zhao Yali was being courted and she suddenly felt that her chest was cold. She did not even realize that her shirt was already removed.

Her face became even more rosy and she quickly grabbed her shirt which was going to fall and said, "Are you crazy? They will

find out!"

"Don't worry, we are far enough." Luo Yuan was holding his excitement and said.

"It's embarrassing to do it here! How am I going to face them if they find out?" Zhao Yali whispered.

"They won't hear us as long as we lower our voices." Luo Yuan tried to persuade her as he whispered into her ear. At the same time, his hand already impatiently lifted her snowy thigh up and locked it on his waist.

Zhao Yali realized the familiarity of his words as she just said the exact thing to him earlier. However, she had no time to figure out what to do in the next second. She moaned as he began to explore her body. Her mind went blank and her soul was following the rhythm of his actions.

The very last bit of her rationale made her cover her mouth and what was left were deep moans in the dark.

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Zhao Yali was lying on the ground with rosy skin and she felt as though she had just finished a free combat battle.

"Are you alright?" Luo Yuan asked.

She glared at Luo Yuan for a second and quickly put on her clothes. She noticed that there was a wet puddle on the ground with a nasty scent. She felt embarrassed and repeatedly stomped on the puddle to try to hide it.

Luo Yuan smiled as he looked at her shy expression. He then said, "Leave it to me, the sun is coming up."

"It's all your fault! I'm leaving now." Zhao Yali was mad at him for making her feel embarrassed. She quickly ran away.

# Chapter 224: Explosion

Insignia Editor: - -

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After Luo Yuan successfully got rid of all the traces of his sexual desires, he noticed that the sky was still dark. Thus, he did not hurry to get back. He paused for a while to reflect on what had happened and then started pacing back and forth. Suddenly, he just stopped and started doing Tai-Chi. His method is very different from ordinary Tai-Chi in terms of speed and style - his was much faster. Every movement could cause maximum destruction even though it looked smooth and graceful.

Any normal person would not be able to capture his movements in its entirety. When his attacking speed approached its limit, Luo Yuan could feel the air in the surrounding become a viscous liquid. Each of his punches were several times more powerful than his usual ones but his vision would keep getting blurry as the air keeps on twisting and boiling. When he gradually slowed down, the surrounding air also gradually got back to normal.

In less than a second, Luo Yuan swiftly released another punch into the air and it formed a cloud-like circle around his fist. He stirred the surrounding air and pushed it away with an invisible force. It hit a cliff nearby which caused a few rocks to scatter all over the place. His movements were inconsistent - sometimes fast and sometimes slow. When he slowed down, it felt like a huge rock was lying on the ground and when he sped up, it was like a lightning struck the sky with a "Pop" sound.

A couple of meters around the area where Luo Yuan was standing was covered in a thick fog. One could only vaguely see a shadow-

like figure moving at a high speed and occasionally some sounds could be heard.

Swordsmanship is an extended skill of boxing - their basic way of generating force was interlinked. With his current level of abilities, even if he practiced frequently, there were no more skills to be trained as he was already classified as proficient. The next level for him would be more related to his will and momentum.

There was nothing too challenging for Luo Yuan before he entered the expert level. There were basically no bottlenecks for him to practice his own version of Tai-Chi. When the sky was getting bright, Luo Yuan's practice slowly came to an end. All the leaves and dust that were previously floating in the air slowly fell to the ground, forming a circle around him.

Of course, there was no Yin Yang pattern formed around him like in the movies, especially since what Luo Yuan was doing was not really Tai-Chi. Although what he practiced looked very similar, he had upgraded every single move through his continuous development. With his current state and power, the Tai-Chi that he practiced had become a brand-new type of kung-fu.

In Luo Yuan's eyes, all types of pre-apocalyptic boxing had a lot of flaws. The actual effect was not satisfying and the force being used was too light. Fortunately, he was already very familiar with his own body and could do a lot of self-exploration to improve his skillsets. Every single move that Luo Yuan made could easily utilize 80-90 percent of his body's muscles while a normal person would only utilize about 40-50 percent of his/her body's muscle when boxing.

Luo Yuan wiped away the sweat from his face and went back to the cave with a fresh body and mind. Most of the people had already woken up by that time.

"You didn't sleep last night? Come and wipe your face, it is so sweaty." Huang Jiahui came to him and handed him a towel.

"Yes, I couldn't sleep so I just went out to do some practice. Did I wake you up?" Luo Yuan asked while wiping his face.

"No wonder it was so noisy, I didn't really sleep." Huang Jiahui said with a smile.

Luo Yuan was slightly stunned for a moment. He looked at her carefully but nothing seemed out of the ordinary. He was relieved and said, "Sorry, I should have practiced somewhere farther."

"Give me the towel, I will go wash it." Huang Jiahui replied.

Huang Jiahui retrieved the towel with a smile on her face, but when she turned and took a few steps forward, her smile had already faded. After the end of the world, her sleep had been very easily disrupted and coupled with the unfamiliar environment, she simply could not fall asleep easily. She was awake when Luo Yuan and Zhao Yali left the cave together. She even heard the soft moaning sounds from afar. She tossed and turned and could hardly fall asleep until dawn. She was still a woman despite the apocalypse and it was definitely a hard time for her to accept this fact.



She sighed slightly but she knew that she should not care too much about it. This was not the first time he had done such things. In fact, she was the one who pushed Zhao Yali to Luo Yuan in the first place, so she should at least act more generously. Sooner or later, she would probably be able to get used to it.

Everyone looked much better after consuming a lot of salt and coupled with a good night's sleep, the gang was livelier than ever.

Early in the morning, there were a few people practicing in the hallway. Luo Yuan watched them and occasionally corrected and taught them. When Luo Yuan approached Zhao Yali, her face blushed slightly and she was visibly nervous. However, she pretended not to see him and tried to act like nothing had happened. She just continued to practice. She seemed to be able to feel Luo Yuan observing her every move and her actions became disrupted and messy. Her face naturally blushed again.

Luo Yuan felt that her actions were very funny but he understood that Zhao Yali was easily affected by what other people thought of her. She felt guilty and uncomfortable with what had happened earlier so he did not mention anything and just walked past her.

"Boooooommmmm!!"

Suddenly, there was a sharp sound coming from somewhere outside followed by another sound which sounded very much like an explosion. Luo Yuan was shocked and quickly looked toward the direction of the sound.

There was a huge mushroom-shaped cloud that shot up into the sky from the forest a couple of kilometers away. Due to the huge impact of the explosion, a giant tree had collapsed and the soil was rolled up. When they looked down from where they stood, there was a hundred-meter-wide hole in the forest. Everyone had stopped practicing and began to be nervous and worried.

"Was it a missile?" Huo Dong looked extremely worried. After a similar experience from Donghu City, he had a strong phobia towards any kind of missile.

Commander Xia observed the area carefully, then shook his head and said, "I've seen many missile explosions... this is definitely not a missile. There is no smog formation from gunpowder and no fire... it looks a bit strange, what exactly is this thing?"

"Could it be from a mutated creature?" Cao Lin asked abruptly. Everyone was shocked and remained silent for a while.

The incident happened about 50-60km from here. 20 seconds had now passed from the time of the explosion. When Luo Yuan heard the sound, he already noticed the smoke soaring into the sky. Thus, he was not able to figure out what had happened over there.

Luo Yuan looked very serious as he kept staring at that blank piece of land. If this was done by a mutated beast, it would probably be something higher than green level.

"Let me go and look!" Luo Yuan said with a heavy heart.

"No, you cannot go! I forbid it! It's too dangerous." Huang Jiahui was scared and tried to stop Luo Yuan from going.

"I agree. We do not know what just happened there. It is better to stay here and observe the situation first, maybe it was just an accident." Commander Xia also urged.

The rest also discouraged Luo Yuan as he was the backbone of the team. If he got into trouble, the whole team would be plunged into despair and collapse. No one had the confidence to survive in this crisis-ridden forest so they all tried to persuade Luo Yuan to stay.

The voices from the team were buzzing around Luo Yuan's ears. He quickly stopped them and said, "We are too close to the incident area. It will take just a few minutes for those high-level mutated beasts to reach here. It is not safe if I don't go and check. Don't worry, I am not going to do any risky moves."

Since Luo Yuan insisted on going, Huang Jiahui knew well enough that it was useless to persuade him anymore. She looked worried and said, "Please be careful, if there is anything wrong please return as soon as possible."

Luo Yuan nodded his head, "You all have to stay in the cave after I leave. Do not walk around. Be prepared. Even though it looks peaceful now, if I find anything wrong I will be back and we might have to move immediately."

Everyone heard his words and felt pressured.

Luo Yuan went down along the wall with his saber in hand. He was running at a speed of about 50 meters per second. The surrounding landscape rapidly passed by his vision and within a few seconds, he had already entered the forest.

He stopped running once he got in and instead chose to hop with the support of the branches and vines in the forest. He was hopping at a fast frequency, as every time he landed he immediately hopped again. There was almost no pause to his rhythm and no mistakes. With his powerful dexterity, he could choose the most suitable branches to hop on, and when the branches were too far away, he would use the vines to swing from one tree to another without any delay.

He tried to scan the surrounding with his senses. There were a few hidden dangers which he sensed and he could avoid them. For example, a snake-like creature that camouflaged itself in the vines; various predatory mutated trees; several colorful, poisonous and seven to eight-meter-long strange insects. The forest was full of imminent dangers.

He felt the constraints of having a lower level of intelligence when it came to some emergency situations and complex terrain. His brain would not be able to produce a fast response and thus this had led to a speed constraint too.

Without any accidents or incidents, Luo Yuan finally arrived at the flattened area in less than seven minutes. It was a mess here; a lot of trees had collapsed. The dried leaves and grass had all disappeared and all that was left was black humus. There were

only a few giant trees still standing in the area with bare trunks. It looked like they were shaved off on one side or missing a big piece of bark.

Luo Yuan took a glance to check on the big hole. His face looked serious.

## Chapter 225: Revenge

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Luo Yuan leaned in and tried to listen. There was nothing abnormal and not even a single buzz from the insects or chirps from the birds could be heard. Only the sound of the wind blowing against the remaining trees.

Since there was nothing abnormal that he could see, he started walking towards the big pit. He walked very carefully until he reached the edge of the big hole. He immediately felt relieved when he found out there was nothing inside it.

The huge pit was about 11-12 meters deep and 60-70 meters in diameter - just like a crater. Perhaps, that was what it was!

Luo Yuan saw numerous stones at the bottom of the pit. It appeared that the stones were a big rock earlier, but it was shattered and scattered around after the explosion. He hesitated for a moment and then jumped down the pit. He touched the stones and realized it they were hot, which proved his speculation was right. However, he was curious as the stones did not seem to be burnt.

When a meteor falls to the earth, vigorous burning would occur due to the friction between the meteor and the ozone layer. Most of the meteors would disappear from the friction and those which were left were the aerolites that were usually bigger with burn marks on them.

He looked up to the sky doubtfully and realized there were a lot

of gray clouds. He sensed that something was wrong. He found a tiny dot that appeared to be falling from the sky. At first, it was about the size of a sesame seed; then, it became about the size of a balloon! Finally, it was as big as a basketball! A light green smoke could be seen behind the "meteor".

As the object was getting nearer and the smoke was getting thicker, it looked as though the object was on fire. Luo Yuan could easily see the patterns on the meteor now and he could smell the choking smell that surrounded it. Based on its trajectory, the meteor was going to collide near to him. He immediately responded and took a few big leaps to escape as fast as he could.

His heart was beating so fast and his blood was circulating his body at lightning speed. The strong sense of danger forced him to run faster than ever.

He dashed past many trees and a lot of information crept into his mind but he could not analyze anything now. He could not even tell if he had been running for a second or a minute. He finally slowed down after he heard the second explosion. "Boom!"

He held his knees and got up from the ground while he gasped repeatedly. After 30 seconds, he looked towards the direction of the explosion. He quickly climbed up to the highest tree nearby to check and realized his speculation was wrong! He was scared by what he just witnessed as there was a three to four km gap between the two collision points.

"What is actually happening? Why did both meteors crash at the same place even though there was no sign of a meteor shower. The

only two meteors to land had crashed at the same area which is just unbelievable."

He felt suspicious and ran towards the new crater. He was surprised as both craters were similar in size and contained shattered stones that looked like pebbles.

His expression changed and he kept staring at the sky as he hoped to find some clues. He stood at the place where the meteors had crashed and did not even blink once.

The sky was the territory of flying animals and it was another world when there was no intersection with land creatures. A few small specks could be seen moving about in the sky and sometimes they moved nearer to the ground. Luo Yuan's eyesight has been upgraded since he ate the eyeballs of the Green Hidden Creature. He could roughly identify the shape and color of one of the tiny dots.

He then calmed himself and tried to identify all of them but he did not find anything suspicious. He has been watching them for half an hour now and his eyes were tired. Just when he was about to stop, a weird tiny spot entered his vision.

It was the mutated green bird! There was something in its claws and it was trying to fly to a higher altitude. Luo Yuan could not see it clearly as it was too far from the ground. He thought it was simply catching some food. It kept going higher into the sky until it disappeared from his vision.



He realized that it was probably not a good sign. And soon, a tiny dot came back again and was falling from the sky!

"F\*ck!" Luo Yuan cursed as he recalled the weird giant green bird!

"You want revenge, huh? Throwing rocks at me!?" Luo Yuan was extremely mad.

Before the end of the world, the strongest bird could fly up to 17,000 meters in the sky. However, a light green level mutated bird can fly higher than that if it overcomes its fear.

Imagine the momentum of a giant rock being thrown from 30,000-40,000 meters up in the sky. It was almost as powerful as a small nuclear bomb. Luckily, there were many big and strong trees in the area which helped to cushion the shocks, otherwise, the entire area would have been severely damaged.

He could not imagine the impact if the giant rock were to drop somewhere near the cave as the trees were all chopped down there and nothing could cushion the impact.

He could only watch the "meteor" fall and pray for safety.

The helpless feeling made him extremely frustrated. He wanted to catch the bird and kill it.

As he watched the rock falling nearer and nearer, he did not try to escape anymore. It dropped after a few minutes and it was about

30-40 km away from him.

At least he knew the accuracy of the bird was low and that was the best news yet. Besides that, he could not do much even if he continued to stay there. He knew the frequency of the attacks which were about once every 20 minutes as the mutated bird needed to find a giant rock and fly to a high altitude to drop it again. Therefore, Luo Yuan was certain that there will be no attack before he could reach the cave.

He was anxious and tried to find a solution while he rushed back to the cave. It was a very difficult challenge as they would all die if the rock falls on them.

"It was difficult to find such a good place to stay, should we move?"

Luo Yuan was very mad as it was not even a green level mutated bird. He could easily kill a light green mutated beast if it is on the ground, however, the light green mutated bird was flying in the sky which really drove him crazy.

Anyway, he is a rational person so he would not attack the bird before he could think of a perfect plan.

## Chapter 226: Observation & Decision

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Luo Yuan told his team about the incident and everyone decided to leave the cave temporarily just as he expected. As he had requested for everyone to pack their things before he left, their luggage were already nicely packed and they quickly escaped after the fourth attack.

The giant lizard began to move forward after receiving Luo Yuan's instruction. The further ahead they went, the more the safe cave that housed them became blur from their vision. Everyone felt a little anxious and depressed.

It was a common trait of survivors at the end of the world. Today you find a new place to stay and get comfortable but it is possible that you are forced to leave for a safer place tomorrow and will need to leave all your resources behind. You will need to look for the resources again when you arrive at a new place. It is a helpless situation but they have no choice.

The lush greenery blocked the Sun but also prevented them from checking the sky as they traveled back to their original base after 1.5 hours. Everyone felt secure again to return to a familiar place. However, they were just 30-40 km away from the cave and that was not considered a safe spot. Despite that, none of them wanted to flee to another foreign place with an unpredictable risk. In the end, they felt that the cave was a much safer location for them so the group decided to return.

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Three days had passed now and everyone gave up their daily activities to avoid attracting the attention of the giant bird. The weather was getting hotter and the cave was tightly sealed. It felt like a sauna due to the bad ventilation. Not to mention the awful smell inside. Luckily, they brought enough water, hence they could still survive.

They only came out to get some fresh air and eat some food. The giant bird continued to attack in intervals but it was much less frequent compared to the first day. Sometimes, there were completely no attacks and other times it attacked vigorously.

The giant bird seemed to be suspicious of them as they have not appeared for a long time. At the beginning, the bird used to fly 10,000 meters above the ground and hardly exposed itself. However, it started flying nearer to the ground lately and it even lingered above the cave a few hours a day. However, it did not expect Luo Yuan and the rest to be collecting data and information regarding its behavior.

Luo Yuan was hiding in the branches of a big tree which were located about 10 km away to observe the giant bird. Of course, other than watching the giant bird, Luo Yuan also observed the Wisdom Tree. Due to the excessive nutrients from the surrounding carcasses, the Wisdom Tree was growing at an insane speed. It grew so much taller in just three days and even the color of the tree trunk had changed. Seems like it was going to evolve very soon! At the same time, the wisdom fruits began to ripen in a large scale and they had a very good fragrance.

It was scary for a tree to be able to eat. Luo Yuan saw a few

mutated beasts trying to go close to the Wisdom Tree, but they ended up being trapped and killed.

The giant bird had finally lost its patience that day after circulating the area for a while. It did not fly to a higher altitude but threw a giant rock which was about a few tons in weight towards the cliff. It realized what it was doing over the past few days made no difference. The giant rock hit the cliff with a "boom" sound and caused the wall of the cliff to crack. A giant rock rolled down the cliff and hit the walkway of another cliff which caused a big hole.

The giant bird waited for a few minutes and then vented in frustration as it did not see anyone of them injured. It then flew away. Luo Yuan watched it go away and then jumped down from the tree when he was sure it had disappeared. Based on his experience, the bird would not come back again today.

He touched and felt the tree trunk as he has left some markings there. The sign was similar to the one he made yesterday after observing the direction the bird flew. He compared the signs and realized the giant bird was flying in the same direction when it left over the past two days. Luo Yuan predicted that its nest is in the direction where it kept flying to. It would not fly in the same direction if it was hunting for food as the possibility of finding a new prey was too low.

He said in his mind, "I believe the bird will land sometimes no matter how high it flies. That's its weakness. Besides that, its nest couldn't be too far away based on the area of its activity."

When the giant bird attacked on the first day, the frequency was about once every 20 minutes. That included the time it took to find a big rock and fly up to a high altitude to drop the rock. It also included the time it took to find a new rock which Luo Yuan assumed is somewhere near its nest. Thus, it was only 10 minutes each way and it probably found the huge rock somewhere nearby as it would not have any interest in getting a huge rock from somewhere further before it attacked.

The mutated bird could fly very fast but it was still slower than the speed of sound. It was about two-thirds of the speed of sound which is about seven times faster than Luo Yuan. If the giant bird needed 10 minutes to reach its nest then Luo Yuan would need about 70 minutes to get there too. However, it might end up taking two hours if he took his current physical condition into account. Also, considering that the nest might be further away than the place where the bird found its huge rocks, then he might need even longer to find the nest.

There was one more important thing which is that birds are always sensitive and flexible. It will be extremely difficult to kill it if he misses the chance. Luo Yuan has been keeping "The Horn of The Green Hidden Creature". He should be able to trick the giant bird with the help of the invisible capabilities from the Green Hidden Creature and light movements.

His head was spinning while analyzing every single possibility. A four-meter long grasshopper-like insect was hiding behind a tree trunk. It silently approached Luo Yuan. Its body looked exactly like the tree trunk.

Its sharp and furious mouth was opening and closing repeatedly while its shiny eyes were clearly reflecting Luo Yuan's image. It was attracted to Luo Yuan's flesh.

However, the creature was being very careful as it could sense danger which made it hesitate for a while. It continued to observe patiently but it finally lost its mind as it did not want to wait any longer. Its rear limbs stomped on the tree trunk and its entire body leaped down from the branch.

Suddenly, a beam of silver light flashed when it jumped into the air. The carcass immediately dropped to the ground and was split into two.

Luo Yuan decided to return to the base first after some deep thought. As it was still early for them to depart, they should get the necessary tools prepared and find the nest at night.

After a while, a brave mutated beast carefully approached the carcass. Its ears were moving and its eyes were observing its surroundings. It quickly bit on the insect's head and ran away. Soon, there were more mutated beasts visiting the place until every single bit of flesh from the carcass was eaten.

An hour later, the entire place was so clean that it looked like nothing had happened there.

## Chapter 227: The Big Lake

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During the nightfall, the forest was filled with a layer of dense fog. A group of fist-sized mutated insects that looked like fireflies were hidden in the hazy mist. Their bodies were glowing and visible even through the fog. It attracted a lot of insects that liked to fly close to the light. Those were its preys.

However, while they were attracting their food, they attracted the attention of their predators as well! A colorful toad was hiding quietly and its light-bulb-like purple eyes were firmly staring at the luminous fog. It looked cruel and hungry but just when it attempted to make a jump, there was a soft rushing sound that came from afar.

At first, the sound was still very weak; however, in just a breath, it seemed to have come nearer. The toad was slightly shocked and quickly hid back into the darkness. It even buried half of its body into the soil. After the toad hid itself, the mist in the air was stirred by a strong force! All the fireflies scattered and tried to fly away. It could be vaguely seen that there was a black shadow passing by.

Only when the sound got softer and the black shadow completely disappeared did the toad slowly climb out from the soil to carefully observe its surrounding. It seemed like the scary monster had gone away so it raised its neck a bit and slowly walked ahead like the king of the new barren territory.

Luo Yuan had departed in the evening and now the sky had completely turned dark. He had no idea how far away he was from the target destination. All he knew was that he had climbed over



three hills, crossed five rivers, and passed through seven territories of huge mutated beasts. He could only estimate the distance based on the time spent.

However, it was quite meaningless to calculate the distance as the danger of the cliff and the complexity of the hilly roads were far more challenging than he expected. The straight-line distance he traveled might only be 100km, but he traveled 500-600 kilometers as a detour to avoid the mutated beasts and their territories, taking more time.

The direction to his target destination was solely based on his visual estimation. When the sky became dark, he had to rely on the coordination of the stars in the sky to make sure that he did not deviate from his original direction. Under such circumstances, making an error was inevitable. It would be fine if it was a only short distance, but for farther distances like this, Luo Yuan might end up a 100 kilometer away from his actual destination.

In fact, he did not know where exactly the nest of giant bird was located, the only clue that he had was the giant rock that was thrown down by the bird. If the nest was not located nearby, the only thing he could do was to wait. Even though it would take a lot of time and effort, the success rate was actually very low.

Luo Yuan had a bad feeling so he quickened his pace and stopped at the top of the highest hill he could find within a few minutes. He was wheezing severely and looked at his watch. He found that he had run for nearly three hours! It had been very exhausting to run continuously for so long even with his strong physique.

After resting for a few minutes, he jumped onto a huge stone on his left and looked towards the target destination to observe the terrain. Luo Yuan has good low-light vision thus even in the night he could see very clearly.

"Eh?" Luo Yuan looked a bit surprised.

He saw a huge lake at few kilometers away. Under the moonlight, the lake was reflecting the sparkling light, and that was the destination that he wanted to head to. He was happy. The pebble he took with him would probably have come from there! In his previous route, he passed through a few rivers with a couple of pebbles, however, they were not in the same size and color that he was looking for.

The stones that were dropped by giant bird were white in color and about four to five tons heavy; they looked like limestones and there were no similar pebbles along the rivers he passed through before. He did not want to rest any longer and was eager to reach his target destination. He used all his force to jump down from a giant rock. The slope was about seventy degrees steep and he jumped directly into the air but fell rapidly due to gravity.

There were trees everywhere underneath him and he stepped firmly on a thick branch to support his fall. Due to the huge momentum, the branch broke instantly when his feet met it. However, that slight contact was enough support for Luo Yuan to make another leap into the sky. Every leap that he made was about 100 meters and he decided to get back on the ground after a few leaps.

Over the past three days, he had successfully cleared himself of the curse and his Will was not only restored, it even improved under the endurance of the curse! He could use his Will freely now and even controlled it as per what he wanted. Though the improvement was not shown in the system, it was a pleasant bonus to him. At this level, it was extremely difficult to improve his Will as it required a lot of time and special opportunities unless it was obtained by attribute points.

After running for about another half an hour, Luo Yuan gradually slowed down. He was in a high density mutated beast area and most of the beasts here were light green level. Some were even higher than that but they were hiding in the dark. The fights here were extremely fierce, and the screams and roaring never stopped ever since Luo Yuan entered. The air was filled with a smell of blood and it made the beasts feel nauseas.

During Luo Yuan's journey, he even witnessed two giant mythical monsters biting and tackling each other. The fierce battle caused the whole ground to tremor and many trees had collapsed under the impact. The ground was stained by more fresh blood. However, Luo Yuan did not stay any longer to watch to two of them who were at least green level. The battle was too terrifying and made Luo Yuan feel pressured.

The drought had continued for seven to eight days now and under such a high temperature, most of the rivers were getting dried up. Those tiny mutated insects could still rely on dew for a living but the huge mutated beasts would die if they could not get any sustainable source of water. Everyday there must be many mutated beasts that come here by following the moist air from the water source. To secure the territory, battles and fights were

inevitable.

The fights here were too fierce and too frequent that the entire ground was all sticky with blood. Luo Yuan felt very creeped out and shocked by the scene. This was simply a battlefield for mutated beasts and the law of jungle reflected vividly here. No wonder he did not see any strong mutated beasts along the way when he came here as most of them were already here for water.

As he was wearing the shield from the Green Hidden Creature, he could hide from everyone. Sometimes he had to pass through a variety of powerful mutated beasts but he managed to do so without catching any of their attention. Come to think of it, even if they saw Luo Yuan, the human body was too small to fill up their stomachs, thus, they might not even have any interest in him.

However, Luo Yuan still walked very carefully and he even tried to evade light green mutated beasts that were typically vulnerable to him. If it was possible, he did not want to start any fight. After walking for nearly an hour, he finally saw the huge lake but he was not able to see the end of the lake due to the mist that surrounded the lake.

At this point, there were many mutated beasts lining along the lake to drink water. Luo Yuan was surprised to see that it was extremely peaceful over here in stark contrast to the frightful scenes that he encountered before. Although there were still a few fights that occurred, it was nothing compared to just now. Most of the mutated beasts seemed to restrain themselves and walk away quietly after drinking some water. Suddenly, there was an injured light green level mutated beast growling and forced its way into

the line where some lower level mutated beasts were already standing at.

Its blood trickled down from its injured thigh and soon it made the water nearby turn red. The light green level mutated beast was too busy drinking water that it did not pay much attention to the blood that trickled into the lake. Some of the mutated beasts behind had moved away but it was still unaware of the strange scene that was unfolding.

Suddenly, there was a drastic change in the lake as it agitated violently. There were numerous sea snakes that were a few meters in length that jumped out from the lake and attacked the light green mutated beast that was injured.

In just a moment, Luo Yuan could see no less than 10 sea snakes attacking the wounded beast. However, the sea snakes were too small to cause any significant pain to the giant-sized light green level mutated beast. Furthermore, its wound was already in pain thus it did not feel any abnormality until a few second later. It finally felt something was wrong and looked up uneasily.

However, it was too late! Luo Yuan could see that more than 100 sea snakes had been eating into the wound of the beast and even into its body. It was too creepy to even look at it now. The light green mutated beast began to growl violently. However, it had no impact on the sea snakes. The snakes were strong; they seemed to stop for a second after the sound wave hit them, but continued feasting on the beast very quickly. A few sea snakes even entered its opened mouth, nose, ears and basically everywhere else they could enter!

In the lake, there was a group of sea snakes wandering towards the mutated beast. At this point, it finally decided to try to escape but it had already met its doom. It took just one step but already felt weak. Its body shook a few times and then fell into the lake causing a big wave and splash.

## Chapter 228: Abundant Treasure

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As the giant creature fell, more and more strange fish drilled into its body. It gradually expanded as tons of those fish filled it. It was still struggling and groaning in pain.

The area around it was empty. No mutated beasts dared come close. All they did was glance in fear from a distance from time to time. As time went by, the beast's body started to shrink. The strange fish started leaving its body, and soon only its bones were left. The body became lighter until it eventually floated on the water.

The waves slowly let it drift to the middle of the lake. Soon another wave washed over the body, the giant beast's skin disappearing in the blink of an eye. The only thing left was a wide, giant whirlpool measuring several meters swirling in the middle of the lake. The entire thing only lasted for a few minutes. The ten-meter long, six-meter tall, light green mutated beast had sunk completely, leaving no remains behind.

There was a short uproar among the beasts, but soon they went back to normal. No mutated beasts dared go near the water where the giant beast had died. Luo Yuan was hiding in the bushes, mumbling to himself, "No wonder there's not a lot of slaughtering going on here. Perhaps the smell of blood attracted those terrifying, strange fish. Maybe it's an unwritten rule. If that's true, then as long as we don't do anything outrageous, this place should be safe."

Meanwhile, Luo Yuan had already discovered pebbles around. If

he hadn't, he would have left that place earlier. The beach a few kilometers away was filled with white pebbles, and most of them were not small either.

Yet...

Luo Yuan glanced at the seven unique mutated beasts from afar, his eyes grim. None of the other mutated beasts dared go close to those creatures. Some of them were lone rangers and loved occupying one place, while some gathered in groups of two or three. Sometimes they stood or lay on the beach, or simply drank water by the creek. Each and every one of them had an elegant, beautiful aura. Every move they made was transcendent. Everyone who laid their eyes on them knew that they were unique.

Perhaps most green-level or higher mutated beasts within a hundred-kilometer radius were there. Luo Yuan hesitated for a while before finally biting the bullet and jumping from the tree, running towards the beasts. He was nervous at first as there was a green-level mutated beast not far away from him. Apparently, he must have been over thinking though, because his presence did not attract any attention.

Only the strongest mutated beasts looked in his direction, but it was plainly out of curiosity. They did not mean him any harm. After all, a human was a rare sight in that virgin forest. Most of the mutated beasts had never seen a human or been harmed by one. Luo Yuan, on the other hand, had broken out in cold sweat. He had confidence in himself, but if that light green-level beast had been just at quasi-mythical level, then a green one would be at a mythical level.



It would be the real deal. Although the two were just one level away, the difference in their strength was like that between Heaven and Earth. Luo Yuan might have killed a green mutated beast before, but it had only happened by chance. He had just been at the right place at the right time. Most soldiers attracted hatred, and he had been hibernating underground, so he had not given his all. Even if he'd used his entire strength to kill the giant snake, he would be end up limping and might not be able to move or fight back. Even if Luo Yuan added one point to his Dexterity and countless points to his Strength, he'd still have to worry about the giant snake's terrifying attacking speed. He guessed that if the two of them were to fight again, he would most certainly end up dead.

Luo Yuan braced himself and looked at those harmless yet superior lifeforms carefully. There was a creature that looked like a bull. It was approximately 12 meters long and six meters tall, and covered in beautiful fur. It was shining softly under the moonlight. It had tall, thin limbs that looked very powerful, and four claws on each foot, pitch black and sharp like lazurite. It also had a pair of five-meter long, spiral-shaped golden horns on its head, that seemed to have a powerful attacking ability.

What made the most profound impression on Luo Yuan, though, was the creature's eyes. Its eyes were watery, with an aloof superiority that lacked any aggressiveness. Although he had walked into its territory, the creature did not seem to care at all. Its size was not big compared to the rest. If he were to compare it to sea creatures, it would seem like nothing.

Even so, Luo Yuan dared not underestimate it. Apart from special entities such as the Heaven's Pillar Tree, green-level creatures were

usually not big in size. It seemed like creatures of that level did not exhibit their strength through big, clumsy bodies.

Luo Yuan thought for a bit, turning his eyes away. He dared not look anymore. He quickly passed through the creature's territory, heading towards the location where the pebbles were. In 10 minutes, he had reached his destination. There were pebbles everywhere. Some of them weighed hundreds of tons, while others were only the size of a thumb. Luo Yuan speculated that there used to be a river bank there once, but as time had passed, the river had disappeared. What was left was only those pebbles, serving as evidence for the river bank's existence.

Most of the pebbles were white or milky white, while some of them had a luster of jade to them. Out of curiosity, Luo Yuan picked up a milky white one the size of a fist. He noticed that the pebble turned warm when it touched his hand, and it reflected the water. There was a translucency to it when one held it under the moonlight.

Luo Yuan realized that it was not some kind of limestone, but a natural suet jade. His feelings were mixed about it. The giant birds had been throwing jade ores. He was not sure whether he should be calling the giant birds tall, rich, handsome creatures, or spoilt brats.

Before the apocalypse, suet jade had cost 10,000 yuan per gram. The piece he was holding in his hand would have cost at least 30,000 or 40,000 yuan per gram, while a gigantic suet jade would be worth at least 20,000,000 yuan.

There was suet jade everywhere. At one glance, he could see at least 1,000 pieces of them. Some of them were even bigger than the one he was holding in his hand, while others weighed more than 10 tons. They were too valuable to even place a price-tag on them.

Unfortunately, they were worth as much as any plain white stone's during the apocalypse. They were worthless. He threw the suet jade in his hand away like a piece of rock.

...

"This is it!"

Luo Yuan was looking through the pebbles when he quickly walked up to a pothole. He seemed to have a lot on his mind. This pothole was obviously the same residue as the rock taken away by the giant bird. There were similar potholes all around the area. Some of them were still damp, while some were completely dry. It made no difference considering the soil in the area. It only took some light digging for him to discover that the soil inside the pothole was even damper. Judging by the different levels of dampness in the potholes, Luo Yuan mentally outlined the giant bird's preference in choosing rocks, trying to look for an existing pattern.

## Chapter 229: Looking For Trouble

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Just like people playing laser-tag, some animals preferred to scatter all over while others preferred to attack in one specific direction. The strange bird belonged to the latter category. Luo Yuan noticed that the bird had chosen a clear path on the giant rock. The nearer to the cave, the damper the soil in the potholes was.

The bird's next move had to be picking up the giant rock closer to the cave. It usually chose rocks that were similar in weight, so that habit did not leave it many choices. Its scope was narrowed down even more.

However, Luo Yuan's estimation was only relative. Mutated birds perceived distance differently than humans. A thousand meters were a long distance for humans, but for birds it was just a few seconds away. Their cognitive scale difference was like the difference between Heaven and Earth.

As a matter of fact, the strange bird's range of choice was approximately 1.5 kilometers in diameter. Even if the bird chose the nearest giant rock that met its requirements, that rock would be at least 100 meters away. The rocks furthest away were up to 1,000 meters away, which exceeded Luo Yuan's attacking range.

Due to air resistance, the bigger the distance, the weaker the power of the spear would be. Once it exceeded 100 meters, the sound of speed could not keep up with it. Even though its power would still be strong, it would be harmless against the highly defensive light-green mutated beast. Luo Yuan would only get one

chance. If he failed, ambushing it again would be almost impossible.

He looked at the time. It was 1 a.m., five hours before sunrise. He had ample time to put his plan into action.

Luo Yuan was struggling to move an one-meter wide rock on his own under the moonlight. He was stumbling and soaking in sweat, his veins bulging on his forehead. He moved forward slowly, the giant rock on his back leaving a one-meter deep furrow.

Although Luo Yuan had killed the light-green bird effortlessly, when it came to this giant rock, he felt powerless. Judging by his strength, even a vulnerable blue level creature of small or medium size would be stronger than him, let alone a light-green one.

"How I wish the giant lizard was here." Luo Yuan could not help but think of his pet, who never complained. Distracted and tired, he slipped and fell to the ground.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

A primitive mutated creature nearby pointed at Luo Yuan, screaming and jumping. It acted as if it had discovered something epic. As a matter of fact, it had been following Luo Yuan ever since he had arrived in the area. Perhaps it thought they were the same species, but was curious about his small size.

Luo Yuan wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry over the fact that

he was being taunted by a mutated beast. He gave it a killing stare, but the Green Hidden Creature's shield rendered it pointless. On the contrary, it made the mutated beast, which was as strong as king kong, even more excited. It ran around Luo Yuan, making strange noises and attracting the attention of several mutated beasts, who they turned their heads to look at them.

That mutated beast had obviously inherited ape-ish characteristics. The fact that many mutated beasts were staring at it did not make it behave itself. Quite the contrary, it seemed exhilarated. It ran around crazily for a while and started moving a giant rock exactly like what Luo Yuan had been doing.

The rock that the beast was moving was even bigger than Luo Yuan's. It had to be at least 10 tons, but that weight was nothing for a seven-meter tall beast. In a few seconds, it had managed to push the giant rock 10 meters away, without even breaking a sweat.

At first, Luo Yuan had been curious about what the giant ape was trying to do. When it pretended to fall while pointing at Luo Yuan and screaming though, he felt as if countless alpacas were running around in his heart.

"Sh\*t!" His facial expression changed as he secretly took hold of his sword. Out of nowhere, he suddenly thought of something and let it go. "You want to play? Be my guest then!"

His face looked dangerous as he walked towards the giant ape, who was laughing while it continued its performance. The ape had not noticed the incoming danger. It was using its strong fists to

beat its chest, producing a loud noise. It was showing off its strength to the mutated beasts looking.

Luo Yuan smirked as he walked faster and faster towards it. They were less than 50 meters away now. He had a clear vision, and a few steps later, he appeared under the giant ape's feet. He twisted his waist and aimed a flying punch at the ape's calf.

The happy ape stopped what it was doing. Its eyes popped out of its head and it let out a groan that shook the Earth. Luo Yuan had not even used all his strength. If he were to use the attack that could temporarily break the speed of sound, he could have bent a metal rod, let alone an ape's bones.

That was just the beginning of the torture of that sneaky ape. After that first hit, Luo Yuan stomped his feet and landed behind it. He aimed carefully behind its knee and gave it a hard kick. The ape was only 0.1 second into its first groan when the second hit made it let out a short, deep moan. The sudden blow made its voice sound distorted.

Its heavy body fell to the ground, its mouth filling with mud. It looked infuriated and ferocious, its muscles expanding and its veins bulging like cobras. There was a terrifying energy in those ridiculous muscles as the ape tried to stand up using its hands.

Bam!

It didn't even get a chance to stand before it was hit heavily on the head, its face plunging into the mud once again.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The punches were hitting its face over and over again like raindrops. Luo Yuan added a little Will on every hit, just to give a lesson this level-two ape who'd been looking for trouble. The addition was only for show, the punches were not meant to kill it.

It was the most painful and devastating fight in the ape's life. No matter how much it struggled to fight back, it was no use. Luo Yuan's Dexterity was 15 points. Slowly but surely, the ape's head was buried deep into the ground. Only the back of its head was still visible.

Despite its thick skin and strong will to live, it was beaten up by Luo Yuan for a full six minutes. Its head was buried deep within the ground, but the sound of its mellow groans could still be heard.

"That's some crazy beast we have here!" Luo Yuan raised its eyebrows as he kept beating it up, adding more Will to his punches. Soon, the ape's roar became a groan. The groan did not last long before it turned into a cry of fear.

Luo Yuan thought about it and stopped. He took a few steps back. The attack was barely over when the giant ape jumped up quickly, showing its terrifying sharp teeth and the vengeance in its eyes. It looked at Luo Yuan, who was standing in front of it, before it lunged itself at him.

It gave him a slap using its hands, which were as big as baskets.



The ape had to be gifted. Its strength was terrifying. Even before the hit had reached Luo Yuan, a strong wind had started to blow out of nowhere. In the blink of an eye, the ape's palm slammed down on the ground. It was not even one meter into the ground, yet the Earth shook a little. That stunning attack did not make it happy, though. On the contrary, it seemed to be scared. It started shaking as it realised that that dangerous little thing in front of it had disappeared.

Its head was the size of a round table, but it looked like a rusty machine as the ape turned around stiffly. It could see a small human standing behind it out of the corner of its eyes. Shocked, it let out a wail and ran away as fast as it could. Its courage to fight back had disappeared into thin air.

However, it only managed to take two steps away before it felt a massive pain on its knee and collapsed to the ground. Its groan went on for an hour and a half, travelling around the area and scaring all the mutated beasts away.

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The ape was squatting timidly on the ground, its eyelids drooping as its eyes stared into empty space. It also experienced the occasional seizure. It was like a teenager beaten up in school. It had lost all its energy. Each time Luo Yuan looked in its direction, it would use both its hands to cover its head as it moaned. The one-hour-and-a-half long fight had turned this motion into a reflex for it.

"Did it hurt its head?" Luo Yuan thought to himself, glancing at it. He was worried, because there had been a message from the system.

"The Dark Blue Level Creature Raging Ape has surrendered. Would you like to keep it as your Battle Beast? Yes/No?"

Luo Yuan had never thought that he'd be able to keep another battle beast. He wasn't sure whether that had come with his evolution or if he could have done it anyway. Besides the giant lizard, he had never attempted to keep any other mutated beast, so he could not confirm either theory.

His face betrayed his excitement. He wouldn't have been interested if this had been just any ordinary mutated beast. Even a normal dark blue creature wouldn't have been of much help. This creature was different, though. It was the size of a human, its physique was majestic, and its strength was also impressive. Judging by its performance earlier, it seemed to have a high IQ, so it would be easier to communicate with compared to the lizard.

It could be a better coolie than the giant lizard too, and be able to take over some of the carrying. Luo Yuan didn't need it to be in battle. As long as it was by his side, it could save him a lot of trouble.

After he clicked "Yes", a brand new Battle Beast attributes panel opened up.

"Battle Beast: Raging Ape"

"Level: 0 (Dark Blue)"

"Attributes"

"Power: 21"

"Dexterity: 13"

"Physique: 20"

"Intelligence: 8"

"Sensory Perception: 11"

"Will: 13"

"Experience: 0/1,200"

"Skills: Hammering: 15; Tearing: 16; Ramming: 8; Casting: 7; Biting: 13; Climbing: 19; Surviving: 18"

"Natural Abilities: Naturally strong, tough skin"

"Status: Elite"

"Loyalty: 65 (there is a risk of betrayal if it drops lower than 50, Full Value 100)"

"Unassigned Attribute Points: 0"

"Unallocated Technique Points: 0"

Luo Yuan was delighted. It was like finding treasure. If the ape had not been strong, it wouldn't have been so active among the beasts. The Raging Ape's attributes were shocking, and it had only just been caught. Maybe it was on the verge of evolving. Except for its Dexterity, the rest of its attributes were higher than the giant lizard's. Especially its Intelligence, which was a shocking 8. It was a very smart beast. Although it did not exceed human intelligence (which normally ranged from 9 to 10), its Intelligence was extraordinarily high for a mutated beast. Calling it an intelligent creature would not have been an exaggeration.

Its sub-attributes aside though, its main attributes were just as developed. Its Strength and Physique were sky-high, and all its attributes were balanced. When it came to potential, the Raging Ape was way ahead of the giant lizard. If it evolved a few levels and improved its Dexterity, which was its weakest attribute, it would have a bigger combat capability than the giant lizard. It was such an unexpected delight.

## Chapter 230: Here It Comes

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A muscle-packed giant ape as tall as a two-storey building followed timidly behind Luo Yuan. It was quite a sight. Noticing that Luo Yuan, who was walking in front of it, had suddenly stopped, the giant ape started shaking. It thought he was going to beat it up again, and it almost covered its head and squatted down. It was obviously afraid of him. It knew Luo Yuan could easily defeat it just by extending his hand. The ape had lost all desire to attack.

There was a story behind that. In the ape's eyes, that small human was no different from the Devil. He was scarier than any mutated beast it had ever encountered. The two of them reached the rocks they'd been moving earlier and stopped. Luo Yuan looked at the giant rock and pondered. He'd beaten up the giant ape instead of killing, not just to teach it a lesson, but also so it would help him move this heavy rock.

Getting to keep it as his Battle Beast had been unexpected. The only trouble now was training it to listen to him. Hand signs were a new language to the mutated beast. Even though it was not easy, Luo Yuan had prior experience. Although the giant lizard couldn't entirely understand all the gestures and words he used, it could still grasp some of the instructions that were used often.

All Luo Yuan needed was sufficient time to train the ape, but time was exactly what he didn't have. He could only hope that this high-IQ beast could surprise him. Luo Yuan thought for a while, and then started teaching his new beast how to work with him.

"Push!" he said loudly, making a rock-pushing sign. He patiently repeated the same thing a few times, looking at the giant ape in anticipation. The ape looked at Luo Yuan and then at the giant rock. It scratched its head, looking lost. At first, it was focused, but soon it became distracted. Luo Yuan shouted at it, but the ape only stopped and looked at him anxiously. It looked like it was in shock.

Luo Yuan sighed. He was disappointed in the ape's ability to understand him. Remembering that the giant lizard had been even dumber than this though, he patiently repeated the sign again and said, "Push!" The giant ape scratched its head and looked away once again. Luo Yuan controlled his temper and tried a few more times, but the ape still wouldn't get it.

"Weren't you mimicking how I moved that rock earlier?" Luo Yuan couldn't take it anymore. Pissed off, he walked over to the giant ape. He wanted to beat it up, but looking at his fearful eyes and shaking body, he gave up. "It's okay, perhaps beating you is useless. After all, it's unrealistic to expect to make a mutated beast listen to you in such a short period of time. The giant lizard took a week to understand my first instruction."

Suddenly, the giant ape looked revived and started walking towards the rock. Luo Yuan saw it and shouted, "Yes, move that rock!" Listening to Luo Yuan's encouragement, the ape stood up straight and quickly walked up to the rock. Using its palms, which were as big as baskets, it leaned forward and lifted the six-ton rock. The ape looked at Luo Yuan in anticipation.

Luo Yuan was speechless.

His face was warm, but he managed to hide his emotions and give the ape a thumbs-up. He finally understood why the ape hadn't been able to get his instructions and why it had been looking around instead of moving the rock. It had not been distracted. Asking it to look for a rock similar to its size had been ridiculous as it could carry a rock like that easily using its bare hands. Luo Yuan's instructions had made it feel lost.

What the giant ape did next surprised Luo Yuan even more. The intelligence of the primitive mutated beast had exceeded his expectations. The ape could understand basic hand signs really fast, and could grasp those that were slightly complicated by repeating them after Luo Yuan.

Its performance was similar to a human's. Perhaps given a little more time and patience, it could even understand spoken language. Eight Intelligence points weren't low by any means. Some mentally handicapped humans were basically on the same level. Luo Yuan was afraid of intelligent creatures, but the giant ape did not bother him. Intelligent creatures in organized civilizations with infinite potential were a threat to humans, but an individual ape couldn't do them any harm.

With the help of the strong, giant ape, Luo Yuan managed to gather all similar rocks in the area in one place in less than two hours. To be safe, he even expanded the range to five kilometers. The time was almost 5 a.m., and a dim orange-yellow light started to shine in the dark. The rise of the sun made the temperature rise as well. The beasts were slowly leaving the forest. The beach was empty, but there was still some noise around.

When the first ray of sun appeared in the east, countless giant birds flew from the nearby forest. Suddenly, the sky turned black with birds spreading their 20-meter long wings. Even Luo Yuan was stunned by the scene.

One of them was extraordinarily big with 100-meter long wings. It had colorful feathers on its back and fur as white as snow on its abdomen. It was like the king of all birds. None of them dared fly within three kilometers' distance of it. The huge bird flew low above Luo Yuan's head, giving off a strong sense of oppression. Luo Yuan almost felt like running away.

It was the biggest bird he had ever seen in his life. Perhaps it could carry a rock weighing even 1,000 tons. When it was far away from Luo Yuan and invisible to the naked eye, Luo Yuan realised his back was soaking wet. The giant ape beside him looked even worse. It was shaking on the ground.

Luo Yuan did not dare stay out in the open. He walked to the center of the rocks and buried himself in the sand. He only left his eyes and nose uncovered. Enlightened, the ape dug a hole using its hands and buried itself like Luo Yuan had just done. The only difference was that it buried its eyes and nose as well. Luo Yuan was worried that the sand would go into its nose when it breathed, but apparently he shouldn't have worried. Half an hour had passed, and the ape had not even moved. The sand was nothing to it.

Initially, Luo Yuan had wanted to chase the giant ape away because he had been afraid that it might affect his hunting journey, but looking at how good it was at hiding, he did not mind it



anymore. Time was passing, and the sun was shining. The temperature on the beach was gradually rising, and the air seemed distorted with steam. The sand had already reached 80 degrees. Luo Yuan believed that if he placed an egg in it, it would be cooked instantly.

He felt like he was being cooked himself. His body was boiling hot. He didn't have to look to know that he was red. His +14 Physique was useless. His body was only getting hotter and hotter. Even the energy enrichment agent in his heart was burning out, the body restoration function not working.

Sweat dripped down his body like water, a sizzling, wet sound surrounding him. Looking at the noon sun, he licked his dry lips. The tip of his tongue was filled with sand. His vision was getting blurry, and his brain would stop functioning anytime now. The only thing keeping him together was his Will, but he felt like he was reaching his limits.

"Isn't it coming? If that's the case, I will have to wait for next time," he thought to himself. Although he could hold up to two hours, by that time he would have lost all his strength. He thought he would wait for another 10 minutes before giving up.

Suddenly, he saw a green shadow fly by with the corner of his eye. It aimed at a giant rock and plugged its body forward like an arrow. The target was near, and everything happened unexpectedly. Luo Yuan cleared his mind and held on tight to the spear buried next to him in the sand. His eyes were half-closed to avoid looking at the creature. He didn't want the strange bird to sense what was happening. Luo Yuan adjusted his body quietly.

His knees were completely bent, his hands were placed on the sand, and his muscles were tense.

The atmosphere had become unbearable.

# Chapter 231: The Return

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Suddenly, the sky turned dark.

A strange bird the size of an aircraft flew down from the sky at the speed of light. It was as if a mountain was collapsing, and an eight-degree typhoon had broken out. The sand was dancing in the air, and dust filled the area. It was like a sandstorm, visibility becoming impossible at a hundred meters away.

The strange bird used its metal-sharp claws to grab a giant rock.

500 meters, 300 meters, 200 meters...

"Just a little more!" Luo Yuan's heart was pounding. He had been waiting for the right time, but what he hadn't noticed was that the wind had blown away the sand he had been buried in. He was completely exposed. A thin layer of sand was nothing to such a strong wind.

The bird's vision was outstanding, a mutated bird's vision even more so. Suddenly, the strange bird plunging towards him had a seizure and let out a frightened scream. Its flying course changed as well. It seemed like its fear of Luo Yuan had been deeply engraved. Noticing him waiting there to ambush it, the bird didn't dare land anymore. It screamed and flapped its wings aggressively as if it was going to fly away.

Luo Yuan knew he was in a pickle. Looking at the bird's strange behavior, he realized that it had noticed him. It was useless to hide

anymore, so he made up his mind. He pressed the sand hard with his hands, and the beach exploded. A blurry shadow emerged within the sandstorm. As soon as Luo Yuan landed on the ground, he ran towards the strange bird like an arrow.

He used his entire body strength, putting all he had into the steps, one after another, explosive steps were taken towards the bird. The sand beneath his feet was splashing around, leaving deep potholes behind him. He squinted as he ran to avoid getting sand in his eyes. As he watched the strange bird stop and attempt to fly away, Luo Yuan was unexpectedly calm.

The 80-meter distance was nothing for him. He reached it almost instantly. On his last step, he landed softly on a three-meter tall rock and jumped. He used all his strength in that jump. The strange bird was 100 meters in the air, accelerating its flying speed to 200 meters per second. As Luo Yuan jumped into the sky, he felt as if he had just woken up from a nap. He was as comfortable as if he was stretching his body. The shadow of his body would disappear sometimes. When it became clear again, his body was folded together.

Suddenly, there was a loud sound, and the spear disappeared from Luo Yuan's hand at a speed that made it invisible to the naked eye. There was only a white cloud left in its place. Just as the spear disappeared, the strange bird let out a devastating scream. It was just 0.3 seconds away. Countless feathers were flowing down from the sky. The bird couldn't control itself as it groaned and flew away clumsily.

Luo Yuan didn't hesitate. As soon as he landed on the ground, he

started chasing after the bird. The bird was flying high and low, as if it was going to fall anytime. At the same time though, it didn't seem like it was going to land anytime soon.

After chasing it for a few kilometers, Luo Yuan felt helpless and stopped, watching the bird fly away from sight. He was depressed. He had risked his life for a whole night to chase it and had been burning himself the entire morning, only to miss it. Judging by the bird's flying pattern though, it must have been hurt bad and barely be holding it together. One thing was for sure. It would not be coming back anytime soon.

Maybe if it was unlucky, it would die of its injuries wherever it was that it was heading. Competition was cruel during the apocalypse. A badly injured mutated bird would definitely be a target for others. Its chances of survival were slim.

By now, the only thing Luo Yuan could do was be optimistic. He touched his injured arm as he walked towards the place he had come from. Looking at the giant ape hiding peacefully at the beach, he was tempted to beat it up and take his anger out on it. He thought about it again and gave up on the thought, though.

He should not push his own mistakes on somebody else. After all, it was his own carelessness that had not let him notice the wind exposing him, and had resulted in him failing to capture the bird. He contemplated his behavior ever since the apocalypse had started. He realized that ever since he had become stronger, he had stopped using his brain. He often used violence to solve everything. He was not as cautious as he had been before. Violence had become the most straightforward and efficient way for him to

take care of things.

Just like a spoiled brat, he would not spend a long time or put his heart into a courtship, but use his money to get what he wanted instead. Whether it was money or personal strength, he was still depending on a certain kind of power. When one got used to the benefits of power, they got hooked. However, once power couldn't solve a problem, it led to them getting hurt or even dying.

This served as a lesson for him. He rubbed the space between his brows and stood up. He stepped on the ground where the giant ape was hiding and shouted, "Let's go back!"

It was almost evening when Luo Yuan arrived at the campsite. As the giant ape was approaching, the giant lizard could smell that there was a stranger invading its territory. It started roaring, and the ape did the same. The sound was so strong that it hurt Luo Yuan's ears as he sat on the giant ape's shoulders. The beast hesitated in moving forward, but Luo Yuan gave it a punch and it unwillingly walked towards the campsite, where the giant lizard was.

Once they saw each other, the two beasts instantly went into battle mode. There could only be one beast around. If two beasts of equal power met, a battle was inevitable. Unless one of them was losing, neither party would run away.

Of course, Luo Yuan wouldn't allow anything like that to happen. He shouted at both of them. Hearing his familiar voice, the giant lizard realized that its master was sitting on the strange mutated beast's shoulder. Stunned, it let out a cry. It was sad that its master

had found a new pet.

The giant ape was afraid of Luo Yuan and squatted quietly in a corner after getting shouted at. It glared at the giant lizard from time to time, as if it was planning something.

"How come there's no one coming out even after all this shouting?" Luo Yuan found it strange. He had a bad feeling about it.

## Chapter 232: The Incident

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Luo Yuan's sensitive senses allowed him to hear the noises coming out of the cave. His facial expression changed, and he ran quickly towards the entrance of the aircraft. Once he stepped inside, the noises got even louder. There was screaming, shouting and the sound of metal hitting against something.

Shocked, he walked even faster and opened the cockpit's door forcefully. His pupils shrunk. There were mutated ants everywhere. There were hundreds of them. He had no idea where they'd come from, but it looked like the place had become their hunting ground.

The one-foot-long ants were turquoise in color, and their bodies looked like they were made of metal, making them look really strong. Although they were small, their speed was faster than a human jogging and their dexterity was pretty high. Their jaws were the size of two palms, and they were opening and closing like a pair of scissors. Their bite would no doubt be fatal.

Everyone had been forced into a corner, barely holding up as they tried their best to kill the mutated ants with their swords. Although they looked desperate, none of them had been hurt. It seemed like they had gained enough strength through their training. Ordinary mutated beasts could not harm them anymore. Even the kids were swinging their swords whenever they got the chance. The ants' outer shell was tough though, and the kids' weak slashes were futile. It seemed like their weapons could use an upgrade.



Suddenly, Luo Yuan noticed Wang Shishi lying on the ground. She was surrounded by the team, and there was blood on her legs. Apparently, she had been hurt. She looked like she was breathing properly though, and there were no life-threatening injuries on her, so Luo Yuan was relieved.

He pulled out his Zhanmadao without hesitation. The sword's glow kept changing as he walked towards the ants. All the ants in his way were injured by just a touch of the sword, and those that were slashed by it died instantly. Soon, Luo Yuan had cleared a path.

Everyone was delighted to see him return. "Boss Luo is back! We are saved! Let's give it our all!" Huo Dong shouted as he slashed an ant into half. The ant's pus splashed on his face.

"Boss Luo, if you'd come any later, I think you would have found our dead bodies," said Commander Xia in relief.

Luo Yuan made his way through the crowd, managing to kill all the ants within a few minutes. His face betrayed no emotion as he squatted down and touched Wang Shishi's forehead. It was boiling hot. "What happened to her?"

"She was bitten by an ant on her leg and passed out," said Wang Xianguang as she looked around.

Luo Yuan was shocked. He pulled at Wang Shishi's pants to have a better look. The wound wasn't deep. It was only a surface wound, but it was black in color. Part of her calf had gotten

swollen. "She's been poisoned," Luo Yuan said.

"Is there still hope?" Huang Jiahui asked, her voice breaking. Everyone was stunned. They didn't think that kind of injury could have been so serious.

"Everyone keep an eye out and don't disturb me!" Luo Yuan said seriously. They all backed off immediately. There were a few ants approaching them, but they managed to kill them instantly. Looking at them handling the situation well, Luo Yuan felt relieved. He took a deep breath and opened his palm. There was a dim glow on it as he placed it on Wang Shishi's chest.

Her body shook vigorously as if she was being electrocuted. Luo Yuan closed his eyes as he held his palm against her chest. The glow remained. Drops of black blood were dripping out of the wound. As time went by, the color of her blood got lighter. From black to purple, and eventually to normal red.

His Will was much stronger than it used to be. Healing was nothing to him now. Half a minute later, he opened his eyes and took a look at Wang Shishi's wound. The poison had been cleared, and even the swelling had subsided a lot. He was relieved as he stood up and walked to the front.

In a short period of time, the mutated ants had filled up the space again. He pulled out his Zhanmadao and started swinging it. With his Dexterity, he could swing 40 slashes in a second. Within a few seconds, he had cleared up a big space. "How did this happen?" he asked.

"It was all my fault. I was too lazy to clean after lunch, so I left the bones in a corner. I was going to throw them away at night. I didn't expect them to attract mutated ants," said Huang Jiahui in fear. "At first, there were only two of them. I thought we'd get rid of them easily, so I didn't really mind them. But then they started multiplying really fast, and I realised it was too late. If Wang Shishi hadn't been here, we wouldn't have made it this far."

"It wasn't all Sister Huang's fault. All women should be helping with lunch. I should take the blame as well," Zhao Yali said. There were frills on her sword, and she was covered in a disgusting green pus. Apparently, the battle had given her courage. Cao Lin was hiding away from them, her face pale from fear. As a matter of fact, it was her who had left the bones in the corner because she had been too lazy and scared to go out. She hadn't expected such a thing to happen.

Looking at Huang Jiahui and Zhao Yali owning up to it all, she felt grateful to them. While she was relieved though, she was also envious at the same time. As long as nothing major happened to Wang Shishi, the incident would be forgotten. Luo Yuan wouldn't even nag them about it. If he knew that it had been her who had caused the scene though, it would be a different story. Although he wouldn't kill her, his opinion of her would change dramatically.

"That's enough. I wasn't going to blame anyone. The weather is too hot. No one would want to go out. Plus, nobody would have expected this to happen," Luo Yuan said.

"See?" Cao Lin thought to herself. The incident was finally over,

and she felt relieved. She'd been unconsciously clenching her fists until they'd turned pale.

Luo Yuan spent a few more minutes killing off all the mutated ants. The ground was filled with dead ants as more and more kept coming in through the gap. It was impossible to kill them all. The gap was two meters long and less than a fist wide. It had been there ever since they had dug the cave. At that point in time, Luo Yuan hadn't minded it, but he hadn't known that it would become a path for mutated ants.

Now that he thought about it, it was fortunate that this had happened at noon when everyone had been awake and alert. If it had happened in the middle of the night, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Perhaps the ants had sensed that their own kind were dying, because more and more kept flooding in through the gap. The rock wall was right under their mouths, and they kept biting it off as if they were chewing biscuits. There was a cracking noise as the gap got bigger and bigger.

Luo Yuan's facial expression turned stern. He had a bad feeling about this. The mutated ants were not attacking them, they were going after their own kind. Thanks to their tough shells and the movement of their mouths, a loud metal noise filled up the whole space. They were eating fast, each carcass getting devoured by six mutated ants. Soon, they had eaten everything. There was nothing left.

Some of them hadn't even died completely, but that didn't stop

the starving ants. They injured ants struggled at first, but it was futile. No wonder that there had not been many carcasses when Luo Yuan had come in. The ants had probably been there for a feast. In half a minute, the number of the ants was the same as it had been before. Luo Yuan's scalp went numb as he looked at how fast they were.

He couldn't think of any other solution except killing them all once again.

"Boss Luo, it seems like we can't stay here tonight. There must be an ant colony somewhere in there," Huo Dong said.

Luo Yuan nodded and said, "Everyone pack your bags, we're moving into the grotto for the night."

"Have you settled the mutated bird already?" Huang Jiahui asked in joy.

Everyone was looking at Luo Yuan.

"That bastard was too fast. It managed to get away, although it was badly injured. Even if it doesn't die, it will not come for us anytime soon." Luo Yuan paused. He got upset when he thought about the mutated bird getting away.

Although it hadn't been killed, everyone was relieved that they could still live in peace for a few days. Suddenly, Luo Yuan heard something. He put his ear on the wall and listened carefully. There

was a cracking noise inside the wall, as if countless ants were chewing it from the other side.

He was stunned as he said, "We don't have much time. Pack your bags, we're leaving this place right now!"

"What's happening, Luo Yuan?" Huang Jiahui sounded worried.

"The wall will crumble soon from the chewing, and there will be a massive number of ants flooding in. By that time, I won't be able to save you all," Luo Yuan said as he lifted Wang Shishi, who had been lying on the ground.

Everyone was scared and ran towards their bags right away. Suddenly, cracks opened up on the wall, forming a web, and ants started coming in aggressively through them.

"There's no time, we need to leave right now!" Luo Yuan shouted while quickly killing the mutated ants closest to him. It only managed to buy them a little time as more and more ants flooded in. There was a four-meter tall hill of them near the wall. Even Luo Yuan was scared and had to take a few steps back.

What he hadn't wanted to happen, was happening. A couple of mutated ants were no harm, but a crowd could be more terrifying than a green-level creature. He had seen documentaries on ant tides before the apocalypse. He remembered what a catastrophe they were. He remembered seeing ants on countless carcasses, and creatures running away wailing. Some of them had been eaten by the ants, only bones left behind within a few minutes. The food

chain meant nothing anymore. If you were careless, you would get eaten. It wasn't just animals, even plants were victims of that phenomenon. That was somehow even more terrifying. Every living thing was fated to die. Those had been regular ants too. Mutated ants would be even more disastrous.

# Chapter 233: The Detection Technique

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Everybody grabbed their bags and ran for their lives. The moment the cockpit's door closed, the wall collapsed. Countless mutated ants flooded in like spring water, filling up the cave within seconds.

Luo Yuan took a glimpse and felt his scalp tingling. "Come on, we need to run!" he shouted. He knew that the cockpit's metal door would not hold against the mutated ant's sharp teeth any longer. They all ran out of the aircraft anxiously, slowing down their footsteps when they saw the giant ape moping around in the distance.

The ape was seven meters tall standing up and three meters tall squatting down. Its muscled body intimidated them even from a distance. "Don't stop running! This is the new Battle Beast I adopted!" Luo Yuan said loudly while gesturing for the giant lizard to lower its body.

The lizard snorted and lowered itself immediately. Everybody ran towards it in shock and climbed up on the lizard's back clumsily. The beast seemed to know that something was wrong and ran towards the forest without hesitation.

Noticing that Luo Yuan had left, the giant ape stood up and caught up with them quickly. Thanks to its painful lessons, it knew it would be a nightmare if it did not follow the short fellow and stayed there.



Sitting on the giant lizard's back, everyone felt slightly relieved. They turned their heads to glimpse at the strange beast from time to time. It had the appearance of an ape, with golden brown hair all over its majestic body and hands that extended lower than its knees. It was shining bright under the dusking sun. If it were holding a baton, it would have been easily associated with a wild mythical character.

However, its expression ruined its stunning appearance completely. The way it walked betrayed its uncertainty and made it look like a wretch. When it noticed everyone looking at it, it took on a flattering expression that made the situation awkward. Apparently, the giant ape treated Luo Yuan's companions with the same fear it treated Luo Yuan himself.

"Boss Luo, look!" Lin Xiaoji shouted. Luo Yuan turned his head to look, and frowned at the wreckage of the aircraft that was being devoured completely by the mutated ants. From a distance, it looked like it was covered by a thick layer of turquoise carpet, the carpet spreading and wiggling like waves.

Everybody was affected by the sight. Their scalps were tingling, and even the two mutated beasts were acting up. Fortunately, the ant tide was spreading slowly and did not cause any major uproar. Eventually, they were not able to see it anymore as they kept moving forward. They were all relieved.

"It would be great if we had some gasoline. We could burn them once and for all!" Huo Dong said.

"Gasoline? Even if we did have some, we would not waste it on

them. There's insufficient gasoline in the reconstruction area," said Commander Xia.

"The reconstruction area is in trouble. Isn't there a large gasoline field there?" Hua Jiahui asked in confusion.

Commander Xia shook his head solemnly and said, "There is a gasoline field in Taklamakan, but it can't be used in large quantities anymore. There are more than 10 million military teams as we speak, including those in reserve. Let's not even talk about the transportation trucks, the tanks, and the armored vehicles. The self-propelled artilleries alone are hundreds of thousands. And that's just the land force, we haven't even taken the air force into account. They use as much gasoline as the land forces. The amount of gasoline is barely enough. As a matter of fact, they also lack food, ores, coal..."

Huang Jiahui and Huo Dong stopped talking. It felt as if a huge rock was pressing down against their hearts. Luo Yuan kept quiet. He had an urge to take a look at the reconstruction area. It was a most magnificent era, despite the fact that humans were the most cruel they'd ever been and it took everything they had in them to survive.

He knew that he could not keep running forever. If he wanted to live, he had to learn to face all obstacles.

He could not save all humankind himself, he didn't have that ability. As a part of humankind though, he had to work together with others and give it his all.

It had been a week since they'd moved back into the cave. After the thunderstorm, the plants had been growing rapidly. Everybody had plenty of spare time outside their training, so they got busy clearing the weeds in a one-kilometer radius around the area every two or three days. After a week of housekeeping, the area looked completely different. The mutated bird had not made an appearance yet, and they were not sure whether it was dead or just afraid. According to Luo Yuan, it was most likely the former.

Meanwhile, the ant tide had mysteriously disappeared four days ago, as suddenly as it had appeared. Nobody knew where the ants had gone. Maybe they were hiding underground. Luo Yuan made a trip there to check, but there was nothing but a mess left.

There were bones everywhere within a 10-kilometer radius, and the area looked dead. Both the mutated creatures and half of the plants had been destroyed. Those plants that survived had been chewed down to their core. The ants were savages. They had eaten anything and everything except the rocks.

Luo Yuan was really relieved by their disappearance. Although their speed was not fast or threatening, they would usually appear out of nowhere without warning. They covered a wide amount of ground, so once one was surrounded, there was nowhere to run unless one managed to clear a path by killing them. Plus, their density was really high when they stacked themselves on each other. They could not be compared to the usual crowd of mutated beasts. If their range of attack was slightly better, even Luo Yuan might not have been able to survive.

After all, there was only a limited number of times that he could use the Earth Stomp. After a few times, it would be completely used up, and if it did not manage to get him out of range, only death would be awaiting him. Perhaps they had been lucky, because the ants had been coming from a point that allowed them to escape easily.

Apart from the aftershock of the ant tide, the day was unusually peaceful, giving everybody a sense of harmony. Compared to the lake, which was filled with high-level mutated beasts, that area was deserted. Almost no one was passing by besides the occasional low-level mutated beast that gave Huo Dong and the rest an opportunity to train.

Meanwhile, Luo Yuan took the chance to experiment with his new special ability. That special ability had come with the upgrade. Initially, Luo Yuan had not noticed anything. He had only discovered it when he had been managing his skill points and realized that there were three special abilities on the attribution panel. There was a special ability given for every five upgrades. He had acquired the identification technique at level zero when he had first gotten the system, and the synthesization technique at level 5. Now that he was on level 10, he had acquired the detection technique.

Luo Yuan was excited at first because he thought he recognized that ability from games he had played. The detection technique would make him unilaterally transparent, which would be a big advantage in battles. Later on, though, he discovered that this technique was not the mysterious ability he knew from games. The message received was so simple that it was almost crude. The specific property points and skill points were no exceptions.

The detection technique was like a search engine connected to a mysterious databank. For instance, if Luo Yuan was to use it on an unknown plant, he would see this:

"Species: Herb"

"Name: Serrated Grass"

"Remarks: A non-poisonous, very common mutated plant found in the Northern hemisphere. It has thick tubers with certain edible values and slightly bitter leaves with a minimal healing effect."

Although the message was simple, it was not completely useless. Of course, the identification technique could be used for the same purposes, but one only provided specific knowledge while the other provided general knowledge. Distance also made a difference. The identification technique required physical touch, while the detection technique could sense anything within 50 meters of Luo Yuan. This would make his life much easier when it came to data collection, as well as ensuring his survival and strengthening his danger avoiding abilities.

Luo Yuan looked at Huo Dong, who was training in the distance. He used the detection technique quietly on him.

"Species: Human"

"Sex: Male"

"Remarks: This is a member of the human civilization on Earth. His intelligence fluctuates between +9 and +11. He has a weak physique, but excels at thinking and creating. He has reached level-two civilization peak and possesses certain potential."

## Chapter 234: Pain

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"Boss Luo, here's a glass of water for you!" Wang Shishi said while fetching a glass of water for Luo Yuan with a smile.

Luo Yuan took a sip, gave the glass back and continued his search, plucking the occasional obscure herb.

"Boss Luo, what are these herbs for?" Wang Shishi asked in an adorable manner.

"To make soup!" Luo Yuan said without even lifting his head.

Apparently, these herbs were scarce. It took him a while to find another one. Wang Shishi glanced at the herbs he was holding. She thought they were no different than the rest. They looked like common herbs. The only difference was their veins, which were silver in color. That was not entirely unusual either though, considering that they lived in a world filled with mutated things.

"We can use these herbs to make soup? Nice soup?" Wang Shishi asked curiously.

"I've never tried it, but I'm sure it won't taste nice!" Luo Yuan said casually.

"Then why are you looking for these herbs?" Wang Shishi asked inquisitively.

Luo Yuan finally stood up and looked at her. "Why are you here? Have you finished your training for the day?"

"Why are you asking me that every time you see me? I'm not a kid!" Wang Shishi said with a pout. "I can fly like a bird now!"

"Stop bragging and show me," Luo Yuan said with envy. Ever since Wang Shishi had been bitten by the mutated ants and slipped into coma, she had been able to fly. She had discovered it the next day when she had woken up. Nobody knew if the ability had been triggered by the ants, or if she had developed it through training, but it was certainly a happy accident.

Of course, 'flying' was an exaggeration. She could just levitate five meters above the ground. Levitation was easy. It was moving in the air that was difficult. For a mechanical model to be able to lift vertically, it only had to move forward. All it took was a shift in the angle.

However, that was an ideal state. Humans belonged on the ground. Being in the air caused them tension and made their vision shift from two-dimensional to three-dimensional. It was also difficult to control one's emotions and body while in the air. When one got distracted, their body would slant easily and fall to the ground. Levitation and flight might seem really close, but without practice and adaptation, there was a long way to go from one to the other.

"Watch me fly!" Wang Shishi said in frustration. She placed the glass of water further away, stared at Luo Yuan and said, "I'm going to fly now!"



Luo Yuan stepped aside and nodded.

Wang Shishi took a deep breath and calmed herself down. Soon, there was an invisible force rumbling on the ground. Dust flew everywhere, and all the weeds nearby were pushed by a strong force.

Wang Shishi levitated slowly, the air around her becoming slightly distorted. She stopped when she was three meters above the ground, and attempted to move forward. Her speed was slow at first. She was tense and her expression was serious. Once she got the hang of it though, she started picking up speed gradually. From three meters per second, she was eventually able to move 10 meters per second.

"Don't just go straight, try turning!" Luo Yuan shouted as he frowned.

Wang Shishi was shocked. She slowed down her speed and was able to make a 30 degree turn after five seconds. One minute later, she landed on the ground panting.

"So this is what you meant when you said you could fly like a bird? Did you mean an ostrich?" Luo Yuan mocked her.

"I practice everyday, but turning is just too difficult. I can't master it," Wang Shishi said with a blush.

"If you know it's difficult, then you should practice even more! Practice until it's in your blood. Nobody is born that way. If you don't fully explore your gift, it will go to waste!" Luo Yuan said.

"But I'm already trying very hard!" Wang Shishi said in a choked voice. She was on the verge of crying. "I just thought you might be thirsty and wanted to fetch you a glass of water! What did I do to deserve to be scolded?"

Looking at the tears in Wang Shishi's eyes, Luo Yuan's heart softened. "Maybe I was too strict. I know you have been trying very hard, but to me, that's not enough. I wouldn't even bother if this was somebody else, but you are different!"

"How am I different?" Wang Shishi pouted again.

"You have been with me for the longest time. We have been through a lot since the apocalypse started. We're like a family now. With your gift, you have the potential to survive the apocalypse. That's why I'm extra strict with you. Do you understand?" Luo Yuan explained sincerely.

Wang Shishi blushed. She had focused on the part where Luo Yuan had expressed how close they were and ignored the rest of his words.

"Alright, let's head back!" Luo Yuan said in satisfaction, noticing Wang Shishi's good behavior.

"Okay!" Wang Shishi nodded in agreement.

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"Use these herbs to make a bowl a soup," Luo Yuan instructed the women, who were cleaning. He left the herbs on the table and walked towards the cave.

"Sure. How many bowls of water should we use?" asked Huang Jiahui as she looked at the herbs in curiosity. She did not ask anything else.

"Let's use four bowls to make one bowl," Luo Yuan said after thinking. "Where are the rest?"

"They're hunting with King Kong," said Huang Jiahui with a giggle, covering her mouth.

King Kong was the giant ape. The giant ape had a high intelligence similar to humans and an outgoing personality. It had been hiding its personality in the beginning because everyone had still been a stranger, but it had not taken long for it to get close to them. Its relationship with the rest was perhaps even closer than with Luo Yuan, to the point that they even went hunting together now. It was not the first time this was happening. They usually would not go too far, so Luo Yuan was not worried.

Huang Jiahui cleaned the herbs swiftly and started boiling them in the stone pot. Soon, a pungent smell filled the air. Huang Jiahui

sneezed several times, and stepped away from the pot.

"Boss Luo, what is this thing? Its smell is suffocating!" Cao Lin, who was nearby, could not help but ask.

"It's a very special herb," Luo Yuan said. "Eating it will give you an extreme sense of pain."

"So what are you going to do with it? Eat it?" Huang Jiahui asked.

Luo Yuan nodded. "You should all experience the effect of Will. Enduring pain is an extreme exercise in willpower. Don't worry though, it's not poisonous."

Everybody was stunned.

"Is this... necessary?" asked Huang Jiahui with a confused expression on her face. This was beyond painstaking. It was practically self-torture. She did not ask Luo Yuan how he knew that the herb was not dangerous. He seemed to have a mysterious ability to distinguish between what was edible and what was poisonous.

Luo Yuan laughed. "I'd rather endure some pain now than die because I'm unable to overcome any danger!"

"Then save some for me!" Huang Jiahui said. She thought that she was a burden to Luo Yuan, so that was the least she could do to help.

"I want to try it as well!" said Wang Shishi.

Everybody wanted some all of a sudden.

"Are you guys sure?" Luo Yuan laughed while looking at the women. "Don't come crying to me later!"

Luo Yuan had gone through that kind of pain before. He had chewed on a piece of leaf and had felt an indescribable pain spread all over his body. He had felt as if every inch of his muscles and organs had been on fire. He would rather have passed out than have to endure it. Although he had a Physique of +14, he had not been able to bear it. The pain had lasted for a full 10 minutes, and had been like walking through hell.

That had only been the effect of one piece of leaf. There were more than 10 in that soup. Luo Yuan felt his scalp tingle and fear grow inside his body.

"Why do you despise women so much? If we were to compare pain endurance, how could men even compare to women? Men can never even imagine the pain of childbirth," said Huang Jiahui, feeling patronized. She suddenly thought of her daughter and became solemn.

"Very well then. Let's try it together!" Luo Yuan said helplessly.

The soup was ready soon. It was scooped into a wooden bowl,

and had an orangish-yellow color and an extremely pungent smell. As humans living in the apocalypse though, their tolerance was far higher than an ordinary person's. The smell barely made the women frown.

The soup was divided into smaller bowls, and everyone was given a spoonful. If Luo Yuan did not stop them, they would have taken even more.

"I'll go first!" he said while lifting up the bowl. He blew into the soup, took a deep breath, and drank it.

Maybe it was the decoction, but the herb took effect faster than last time. Within a few seconds, his face grew stiff and he let out a soft groan. The wooden bowl slipped from his hand as he struggled, his body shaking while he clenched his teeth. Big drops of sweat dripped down his forehead.

He tried his best to endure it, but a few seconds later he was already rolling on the ground. He was having seizures all over his body. Everyone was scared. They looked at each others' faces and turned pale. As they studied the orangish-yellow liquid in the bowl, they felt a chill going down their spines.

## Chapter 235: Direction

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The cave was filled with sounds of extreme pain and stress. No one had ever seen Luo Yuan show such emotion before. Even when he had been badly injured and vomiting blood, he had still looked as if nothing was happening to him. He had acted just like a normal person.

This kind of pain had pushed him to his limits, though.

"Will he be alright?" Zhao Yali was worried.

"Besides the pain, he should be fine. Luo Yuan isn't reckless. He'll probably be okay soon," said Huang Jiahui after giving it some thought. She knew that even if something happened to him, there was nothing she could do about it. All they could do was let God take the wheel.

The pain was so intense that Luo Yuan was rolling on the ground, soaking it in his sweat. Everyone felt scared as they looked at him. Cao Lin was shaking as she asked, "Then... should we drink it?"

Zhao Yali opened her mouth as if something was stuck in her throat. "I think we should put this on hold. We can decide after Luo Yuan has recovered," she said.

Although she did not say it, there was some hesitation in her words. She was usually afraid of pain. She could bear a common wound, but this was a kind of pain that even Luo Yuan could not stand. Even thinking about it gave her goosebumps.

"Boss Luo will make fun of us, right? We all lied to him," said Wang Shishi. She glanced at the orangish-yellow liquid she was holding as Luo Yuan struggled on the ground.

She admired Luo Yuan the most, so what he thought of her mattered to her a lot. Plus, he had taught her a lesson on boasting earlier. Everyone was silent ever since Wang Shishi had spoken. "Let's drink it. It's not poison, anyway. The pain will just last for a little while. It shouldn't be too much for me. I've gone through childbirth after all," said Huang Jiahui. She was usually a lady, but she would man-up at critical times.

Just as she was about to drink though, the others exclaimed, "He's up!"

Everyone was both stunned and scared at the same time. Huang Jiahui went to him immediately. Luo Yuan was struggling to stand up, clenching his teeth as his facial muscles were having a mild seizure. His eyes were blood-red, and he looked as if he was going to eat someone.

"What's wrong, Luo Yuan?" said Huang Jiahui, ignoring her fear and running towards him.

"Go away! Everyone leave this place right now!" Luo Yuan waved his hands, pushing Huang Jiahui away. His voice sounded like it was being forced out of his teeth. The sound it made was like the wind blowing. It gave everyone goosebumps.



"Boss Luo, are you okay?" Wang Shishi asked.

"Stop talking! Everybody get out of my sight right now!" His body was flickering like a dim light, an oppressed vibe spreading out from him.

"Go! Let's leave this place! Luo Yuan can't hold it back any longer!" Huang Jiahui shouted anxiously. She knew that when one reached their pain limit, their sanity crumbled to the point of insanity. By then, it would be extremely dangerous for them to stay.

Scared, everyone ran out of the cave immediately. Their momentum increased as a strong sense of fear rose in their hearts. They backed off until they were 50 meters away. Just as they stopped, a loud noise came from far away before the continuous sound of an explosion was heard. Those 50 meters had saved their lives. From the outside, the cave looked blurry, as if the air was boiling at a high temperature. Everything seemed like an illusion.

Although they were standing outside, they could feel a strong sense of repression. Cao Lin felt a quake under her feet. Her face turned pale as she thought, "Could a human do that?"

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It looked like thunder was rolling inside the cave as dust and sand were flying everywhere. The whole image was a blur. It was like a beast was growling. What shocked them even more was how the dust and gravel trembled in the air at high speed. It was just not

normal.

Since the upgrade, Luo Yuan's sword technique had already reached expert level, which was level 5. His application of his force field was god-like. In that mysterious force field, the air was thick and oppressive, with an intimidating vibe. If a mutated beast was surrounded by it, they would die instantly.

In the midst of the thick, rolling dust, a blurry human shadow was bumping into things. There was a screeching sound produced by every hit, leaving deep holes on the cave's walls. Using his force field, Luo Yuan made the air sway along with his movements. It was a perfect combination, which made the effect even better than what he could usually achieve.

His speed was extremely fast. Before long, the cave's wall was filled with holes and cracks that looked like spider webs. Surprisingly, the collision of his fists with the rocks did not hurt him. There was not even any redness on his hands. On a closer look, there was a layer of a dim glow around his body. The glow was as thin as a moth's wing, but it was as tough as if it were tangible. No matter how he moved, the glow showed no signs of cracking.

He was hit by another wave of pain. It was as if he had been thrown into an oven set on high temperature, and at the same time was being stabbed over and over again. It was driving him crazy, and he was clenching his teeth really hard. A cracking sound was heard, and suddenly there was blood flowing from the sides of his lips.

"Ahh!" he screamed, the veins on his forehead bulging. Teeth filled with blood dropped on the ground. The sound was like metal falling. He had bit off his own teeth. He sat down eventually. He held his fists tight and started punching the ground with all his might.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Rocks were scattering everywhere, and soon there was a deep hole on the ground. His strong Will was the only thing giving him the strength to survive, but it was obviously reaching its limits as well. Every time he moved, the glow on his body would dim.

It went on and off for more than a minute before disappearing completely. He let out a groan and crashed down on the ground. His body was shaking and he was rolling on the floor as he moaned in devastation. Soon, the pain started to subside. The extreme pain he had been through was nothing compared to this. He was numb to this kind of pain.

A few minutes later, he slowly stood up.

"I really miscalculated this time. I hadn't expected the effect of the Wailing Herb to be this strong. I almost died from it." Luo Yuan was pale. Fear was still lingering on his face.

The incident had not been risk-free. When one went beyond their pain threshold, death was always possible. Fortunately, he had survived. Except he felt that something was wrong. He touched his face, only to realize that a few of his teeth were gone, and the rest

were all loose. He spit out blood unhappily.

There were no hospitals, so it seemed like this was it for his teeth. He was not sure if his +14 Physique could make them grow back. He looked at the area around him and realized it was a mess. Not only were there cracks on the walls, but even the tables and bowls had been completely crushed.

Luo Yuan sighed. "Seems like we need to move to another cave!"

He walked towards the pond. The water was muddy, but tolerable. There were only some stone chips at the bottom of it. He figured that the water was not drinkable anyway, so he took off his clothes and jumped in.

The pond had been dug by the giants, so it met the giants' standards. It was so deep that the water reached his throat. He let out a breath. Since the apocalypse, he had never taken a bath like this. Water was too hard to find, and the danger in the wild did not allow him to bathe in peace.

Knowing that the women would come to his aide soon, he took a quick dip before he got up and washed his clothes thoroughly. He shook his body, and water droplets fell. Soon, he was all dried up. Once Luo Yuan has fully clothed again, the women came in.

"Are you okay? That was terrifying!" Seeing that Luo Yuan was okay, Huang Jiahui was relieved.

"Don't worry. It was just pain, there was no poison," Luo Yuan said casually.

"What happened to your voice?" Huang Jiahui asked curiously. She thought his voice sounded airy.

"Boss Luo, you lost some teeth!" said Wang Shishi, looking at the teeth on the ground. "Look, there are four of them, and they're all your laniary teeth!" she said loudly.

Luo Yuan glanced at Wang Shishi. He looked really unhappy.

"Alright, let's pack our stuff and move to the cave next door." Huang Jiahui looked at Luo Yuan's unhappy expression. She thought it was funny, but she changed the topic fast.

Actually, there was nothing much to be packed because most of their stuff had been destroyed by Luo Yuan. All that was left were the weapons and salt that had been placed in the corner.

The new cave was much smaller than the previous one, but it was still spacious enough to fit most of them. After all, it had been occupied by giants. After cleaning, the team that had gone hunting came back with some shocking news.

"You saw an airplane?" Luo Yuan asked in all seriousness.

"To be exact, it was a heavy-duty transportation aircraft on the same mission as us," said Commander Xia.

"Which direction was it flying in?" asked Luo Yuan.

"Approximately 30 degrees northwest. I made a draft," said Commander Xia, handing him a carved piece of bark.

Luo Yuan looked at the draft. Although it was rough, it was still clear. "Looks like the magnetic storm has subsided!" He thought about it again before he said, "Everyone please pay close attention to the sky to see where the reconstruction area is!"

The reason they stayed in the forest was mainly because they had no idea where the reconstruction area was. The Kunlun Mountains were wide and had thousands of kilometers of roads. Nobody knew how many cliffs, alps or lakes there were. The signal could be lost during a magnetic storm, but aircrafts always had a channel deviation. However, even if the channel functioned right, they could still lose their way.

## Chapter 236: Wisdom Heart

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The stench of dead bodies around the Wisdom Tree was slowly subsiding. The bodies had been piled as high as a hill, yet now all that was left was a five-meter high mountain of bones that covered a 60-meter radius. The entire gray giant tribe was there, their bodies had decomposed, the only thing left was their bones, scattered all around. Amid the mountain of bones, there was a spiral-shaped tree standing alone. Its lush green leaves and prosperous branches exuded a strong air of vitality.

The image of life and death had a strong spiritual impact on people. Perhaps the Windom Tree symbolized that the birth of an intelligent race would mean the death of another. By absorbing the flesh and blood around it, the Wisdom Tree had grown leaps and bounds since the last time they had seen it. From nine meters tall and less than 40 centimeters in diameter, it had now grown to 20 meters tall and one meter wide. Even the color of the texture on its surface was much more mesmerizing.

Looking at the Wisdom Tree, Luo Yuan sighed softly. The tree itself was a miracle. It was the very source of wisdom. To humans, it was the treasure of their race. Through the Wisdom Tree's ability to assimilate life around it into itself, the Wisdom Tree had been able to evolve continuously within a short period of time. It could easily evolve to a green rank or higher. It could enable major improvements in human intelligence as well as technological advancement. No words could describe how valuable it was.

Too bad that it was located deep inside the mountain, its gargantuan size making it impossible to move. It would not last long there. The only thing Luo Yuan could do was destroy it. He

pulled out his saber, climbed up the mountain of bones and walked towards the Wisdom Tree.

The Wisdom Tree had not been eating, so it seemed peaceful and harmless. It did not make a move as he approached it. Soon, he was standing right in front of it. He took a deep breath and pulled out his Zhanmadao. The saber was shining bright as he swung it at the tree. He left the place immediately before the roots could react to what he had just done.

Once he stopped, the branches of the Wisdom Tree fell with a loud rumble. The roots were rolling like pythons on fire, casting the bones surrounding it away. The whole scene was a big mess.

Luo Yuan watched it from a distance. He didn't react as he looked at the last struggle of the Wisdom Tree. His emotions were indescribable. The roots tangled together as they rumbled. The loss of its branches made the tree get weaker within a few minutes. It didn't take long for it to fall hard against the ground. It had lost whatever strength it had remaining to fight.

As Luo Yuan walked towards the fallen tree, he noticed something unbelievable. Within a short period of time, the leaves on the Wisdom Tree had lost their pigmentation and turned brown. Even the wisdom fruit between the leaves had started to shrink.

Instead of being surprised, Luo Yuan was actually happy. "It's just like what I saw through the detection technique."



This was an exclusive survival technique of the Wisdom Tree. Whenever it was being destroyed, most of its nutrients would be absorbed into the core of the tree. Once it had escaped danger, it would grow new roots from the nutrients it had accumulated. It was a survival tactic that people would usually overlook. Not Luo Yuan, though.

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He had some time while he waited for the nutrients to be absorbed into the core, so he took out a clean Wailing Herb and started chewing on it slowly. Its spiciness soon had drops of sweat dripping down his forehead. Since his last attempt, he had discovered that this had a shocking effect on his Will. The following day, he had realized that there had been a huge improvement in his Will. While he had been fighting against the pain, his Will had become easier to control.

Even more surprisingly, he had realized that there had been a slight improvement to his Sensory Perception. These obvious improvements brought Luo Yuan immense joy. Ever since his painful experience though, he was more careful. He consumed a smaller amount and he usually chewed the leaves slowly in his spare time, like a snack. Although the effect was less potent than the first time, it was better to be safe than sorry.

As the rate of absorption was slower, the pain lasted for half an hour before it started to subside. He wiped away the beads of sweat on his forehead, let out a sigh and sat down on the ground. He did not need his Will to endure this amount of pain anymore, but his energy was consumed at an alarming rate. Each time he did this, it

would exhaust him so much that it would be as if he had just fought a hard battle.

He rested for a while before he stood up and walked towards the Wisdom Tree. Most of its leaves had fallen, and its branches had died and shrunk. Looking at it, nobody would have believed that this tree had fallen less than an hour ago.

Luo Yuan waited patiently until the lines of the tree trunk had been completed. Then he took his saber and walked towards the tree. He walked to the incision he made earlier on the branches and skived pieces of wood fiber. He was very cautious. He was afraid of hurting the core of the tree. There was no rush. He would even wait for the fruit to grow, if he had to.

Although he was cautious, he was not moving at a slow pace by any means. The skiving was so fast, all one could see was his shadow. Pieces of wood fell from the tree swiftly, each of them as thin as a moth's wings. They were all the same size, as if they'd been made using a mold. Even a five-star head chef would have been put to shame by Luo Yuan's skill.

His saber paused slightly as he stopped what was doing. There was a hole as big as a marble on the trunk, exuding a sweet fragrance. Happy, Luo Yuan observed the hole for a little while, slowing down the speed of his skiving.

As time passed, the hole expanded and its fragrance got stronger. Through the hole, intertwined wooden sieves looking like blood vessels could be seen. Luo Yuan became even gentler. Ten minutes later, the inside of the tree was completely exposed. There were

around 10 wooden sieves and a unique tissue link.

Luo Yuan was not surprised. The tissue looked very similar to that of a human brain. Both the gully and the shape looked similar. If it wasn't purple and its size was a little smaller, Luo Yuan would have thought that it was a human brain.

He took a deep breath and calmed himself down as he looked at it. His eyes were sparkling. After a while, he plucked it with his hand. Once it was detached, the trunk shook for a while before the Wisdom Tree died.

Its 'brain' was the size of a palm. It was soft, yet strong, as if it was covered by a layer of skin.

Luo Yuan used the identification technique.

"Wisdom Heart"

"Rarity: Dark Blue"

"Weight: 200g"

"Type: Unique Wisdom Item"

"Additional Abilities: Wisdom +1; Minimal chance of unique mutation"

"Evaluation: This is the rare heart of a Wisdom Tree, which has accumulated the essence of the Wisdom Tree. Its value is immeasurable. If eaten, it could further trigger the cerebral cortex and increase wisdom. Applicable to +15 or below with a minimal chance of unique mutation."

## Chapter 237: Amazing

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The powerful effects of the Wisdom Heart shocked Luo Yuan. Joy was written all over his face.

Soon, he wiped his excitement away and calmed down enough to look carefully at the information provided by the identification technique. He had noticed something.

It was a unique item. The evaluation of such an item was not new to him as the Haunted Locust Heart he wore on his chest was also a unique item. Luo Yuan realized that neither the Haunted Locust Heart or the Wisdom Heart were of a high level. The Haunted Locust Heart was only of a blue rank. Usually, low-level items had no effect on him, however, their value and effect were out of the ordinary, to the point that it was unbelievable. It seemed that these items were above average, and a common evaluation was not good enough for them.

Doubt rose within Luo Yuan, but the message was short, so he could not speculate any further. He could only observe that there was a pattern to these unique items, creating an indescribable mystery around them. They were significantly different from common evolved creatures. They were the miracle of evolution and had a minimal probability of being an infinite evolutionary basis.

All kinds of thoughts flashed in his brain, but Luo Yuan kept his impulsiveness in check, got up and walked towards the cave with the Wisdom Heart. Although the campsite was not far away and he habitually took care of all possible danger along the way, it was not

entirely safe. He was not sure what side effects eating the heart would bring. If he fell into a deep sleep, he would turn into a pile of bones by the next day, no matter how strong he was. There were too many mutated bugs and underground creatures around. During the night, there would only be weak mutated creatures romping around, but even harmless creatures with limited strength could deal with a sleeping human.

Luo Yuan reached the cave soon. After telling everyone not to disturb him, he looked pointedly at Huang Jiahui, who was sitting in a corner.

"We should not disturb Luo Yuan. Let's go out!" Huang Jiahui told everyone, getting Luo Yuan's meaning. The two of them had developed great chemistry after spending so much time together. Luo Yuan had come back with joy on his face, so it was obvious to her that he had something he needed to do in secret.

Everybody else had sensed it to. Hearing Huang Jiahui, they all walked out of the cave without asking any questions. When everybody had left, Luo Yuan opened his hand. The purple 'brain' was in it. He hadn't sent everyone away because he was worried that they would judge him for wanting this treasure all to himself. It was just that the shape of the Wisdom Heart was so unique that it would cause an uproar. Although he could explain, it was too much trouble to do so.

Looking at the heart, Luo Yuan was reminded of the ginseng fruit in Journey to the West. It did not matter that the people living through the apocalypse were not fictional characters like Xuanzang. Luo Yuan took a bite. The heart's texture was like jelly,

and the taste was not as good as he had imagined. It was bitter, with a tinge of sourness and tanginess, and almost impossible to swallow. Luo Yuan remained expressionless. He did not even frown as he finished half the Wisdom Heart in a few bites.

"Compared to the Wailing Herb, this is delicious." The thought popped into his mind. The Wisdom Heart was full of nutrients and essence of the tree. Luo Yuan was only half-way through it, yet he was already feeling full.

He decided to stop, holding the remaining half of the Wisdom Heart in his hand. This thing was too precious. It could actually increase his attribute points, so he kept whatever he could of it. Even though he might not be able to use it himself, the others still might.

He did not know if there would be any effect if he did not finish the entire thing, though. He placed half of the Wisdom Heart in a wooden basin and sat there patiently, waiting for the change to come.

A few minutes later, he felt an itch and numbness on his scalp.

"Here it comes!" Luo Yuan said to himself.

He took a deep breath and tried his best to calm himself down, but he felt uncertain. Changes in the brain were nothing like changes on the flesh. The brain was the nerve center and memory bank of the human body. Even the slightest mistake could cause a memory disorder, paralysis, or instant death.

It was not the first time he'd had changes made to his brain, though. There had been several instances, but those had been controlled by the system. His brain had been dazed for a little while, and then the transformation was done. They had been reliable and safe, with a zero-mistake guarantee.

Using the Wisdom Heart was an original way to trigger a transformation in his cerebral cortex. It was like a person doing business in Africa. If they got sick and there was no hospital, their only choice would be to look for a witch doctor, who was naturally a lot less reliable.

Luo Yuan stopped thinking as the itch and numbness on his scalp got so intense to the point that they grew painful. Moments later, his vision became blurry. The wall in front of him was like a block of butter melting under the high temperature, swirling and mixing into a colorful painting. His ears felt like a radio that had lost its signal. There was only silence and the occasional loud noises. His sense of smell and taste were affected too. He felt all sorts of tastes all at once - thick, bland, bitter, sweet and salty. His brain was filled with messy, contradictory, meaningless messages. Soon, his hands and feet were numb. Gradually, he lost all his senses. It felt like being paralyzed. All Luo Yuan could do was feel. There was nothing else to be done.

That was just the beginning, though. A few minutes later, he lost his sight completely. All he could see was darkness. Next, his hearing, smell, and taste were gone. When he lost his sense of touch, he felt like he had been completely isolated from the world. There was no light, no sound, nothing. He was not even sure if he existed. An unknown fear rushed inside his body, his emotions all



messed up under these extreme circumstances. His fear was a self-instinctive sense of crisis produced by the countless cells inside his body.

He wanted to struggle and scream, but his strong Will stopped him. He knew it was futile. It would only send the wrong signals to his body, causing the evolution to fail. He could not stop. Just like a computer half-way through an upgrade, if he quit while the process was still going on, he would be left paralyzed.

Barely a few seconds had passed, but it felt like a million years to him. His grasp of time had changed and the thought processes in his mind became slow and cumbersome. Eventually, it halted. The very next moment though, his brain fired up once again. At the same time, he could see, hear and smell everything around him. His senses were coming back to him and he could feel a wave of emotions wash over him as his eyes grew wet. He had never realized, how wonderful the world was.

He felt different as he stood up, walking straight ahead in a fast pace. The world felt like a brand new place. Everything was colorful, every sound was rich. He took in the scenes around him greedily, later realizing that this was not the heart's doing.

He had felt this way when he upgraded his Physique, but had not expected a similar effect this time around, when he upgraded his Intelligence. Just as he expected, he understood everything. If he was to use the upgrade in his Physique in the past as an analogy, then his upgraded Intelligence would be akin to an upgrade in a signal receiver. Once the receiver hit its limit, a blur would form on the screen as the remainder of the signal could not be

processed. In a way, Luo Yuan had reached the limit of the signals he was able to handle.

He felt amazing. His thoughts were crystal clear and fast, childhood memories coming back to him in a split second. He could even remember the slightest details, the background of those memories. He was able to calculate the height of the cave accurately to the point that he was able to go into decimals. He could even calculate how many twigs a tree had on its trunk from a distance. Even if some parts were covered, Luo Yuan was still able to see through them.

He could see colors in all its glory and smell a thousand smells. Acute senses, complicated calculations, and long-lost memories... All these information flooded into his head, his mind crystal clear. Even questions and problems from the exercises his teacher used to give him in school came back to him when the memories flooded back. Though these memories were not worth mentioning, they were still flashing around with him solving them in his head.

After he solved the last question, he felt a sense of relief. His thoughts were now clearer than they had ever been, though his unsolved questions had not been completely forgotten; just placed in another part of his brain. When one is unable to answer a question, the question is placed elsewhere and will be marked in the mind as a question that was 'to-be-solved'. As more questions piled up over time, one would have trouble studying as it slowed down their problem-solving abilities over time. Eventually, their thoughts would get slower and they would fail in school.

## Chapter 238: Rotation

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Luo Yuan walked out of the cave and saw everybody having a chat. As soon as they realized Luo Yuan was there, they all turned to look at him.

"Shishi, could you come with me?" Luo Yuan said. He waved at Wang Shishi before he walked back to the cave.

"Sure." Wang Shishi ran happily towards him, entering the cave. "What's up, Brother Luo?" she asked.

"Come here and finish this," Luo Yuan said, pointing at the Wisdom Heart.

There was only a small portion left, so it was definitely not enough for everyone. Based on the speed of digestion, Luo Yuan predicted that the portion would only be enough for one person to upgrade his or her Intelligence. Their special relationship aside, Wang Shishi was still considered the strongest person after him in terms of power, so she'd be able to make a bigger contribution if she ate the Wisdom Heart.

"What's this?" she asked curiously.

A big portion of the heart was gone, so it did not look as scary or disgusting anymore.

"It's a fruit that can increase your Intelligence. Don't panic, I'm

here," Luo Yuan explained briefly to her.

Wang Shishi seemed very happy. As she looked at the half-eaten fruit, she asked, "Am I the only person who gets to eat it?"

Luo Yuan nodded and said, "This thing is very valuable and I only found one. Don't tell anyone else after you eat it, understand?"

Wang Shishi promised and kept smiling. Luo Yuan looked at her and frowned in worry. There was not much risk to an Intelligence upgrade. However, Wang Shishi looked quite emotional, so it would probably be very difficult to get her senses to shut down if he did not remind her.

Luo Yuan told her about the experience of eating the fruit, and Wang Shishi got panicked. She was afraid of the quiet and dark that Luo Yuan had mentioned.

"You don't have to be afraid as long as you calm down." Luo Yuan realized that his words had had the complete opposite effect, so he tried to make her feel better.

His feelings for Wang Shishi were complicated. He felt as if he had a crush on her, but also like she was his own daughter. He was always worried about her, and he was sure he would not do the same for any other girls.

He thought again before he said, "You can try to think of something happy. It will be over soon. Is that clear?" he asked.

"Yes, crystal." Wang Shishi looked tense and serious.

Luo Yuan was probably worrying too much. After all, she had gone through so much with him for such a long time and killed quite a number of mutated beasts. She was no longer the little girl who could not sleep alone at night. She rarely acted like a little girl in front of him anymore.

"Alright, take it now. I'm waiting here," Luo Yuan said.

Wang Shishi took a deep breath, put the Wisdom Heart into her mouth and started to chew. She frowned as she slowly bit the fruit and swallowed it.

"I feel numb!" she said a few minutes later.

"Don't panic. Your senses will start to feel weird next, but you need to keep calm," Luo Yuan said.

"Alright, I got it." Wang Shishi calmed down when she heard Luo Yuan's gentle voice.

Time passed, but she remained silent. Suddenly, her body slanted to the side and she almost fell. Luo Yuan rushed over to support her. She didn't have the energy to support herself anymore. Apparently, her cerebral nerves had disconnected from her body.

Wang Shishi had reached a critical moment. She had not said anything in a long time. Luo Yuan laid her down on the ground and sighed, touching her cheek. He realized there was a teardrop sliding down from her eye.

He was worried about her. After going through so many critical moments together, Luo Yuan considered her his closest family. He could not imagine what would happen to him if anything happened to Wang Shishi.

Anxious, he kept making stupid thoughts in his head. He did not realize that Wang Shishi had recovered from her coma until she tried to move.

"You're awake! How do you feel?" he asked nervously right away.

"I have no idea. It's strange. I feel more conscious now." Wang Shishi slowly got up and looked around her curiously. It seemed as if her surroundings had changed.

"What's the product of 33 and 52?" Luo Yuan suddenly asked.

Wang Shishi was stunned. "1716!" she said after a few seconds.

"How about the product of 78 and 24?" Luo Yuan asked again.

"1872!" This time she was faster. It had only taken her three seconds.

"How about the product of 23 and 465 then?" Luo Yuan continued.

The first two questions had been within the limits of her ability. Normal people had an Intelligence level of 11 points or higher, so they could answer in 10 seconds as long as they could do mental arithmetics. The last question, though, was not as easy as it sounded. Usually, it required an Intelligence level of 13 points or some kind of special training to find the answer.

"It's so difficult! You know I'm bad at Math!" Wang Shishi complained after thinking for a long time.

Luo Yuan was not happy with her. He felt that she had wasted the Wisdom Heart.

"Apparently, her intelligence level was relatively low. Even though she ate the Wisdom Heart, it does not seem to be affecting her much. She probably only has 12-points of Intelligence, but it's still better than nothing. At least her power should have been upgraded a little," Luo Yuan tried to comfort herself.

Intelligence was a unique property. Perhaps the Intelligence of mutated beasts was too low, or maybe there was some kind of limitation on human genes. Luo Yuan had never seen any creature able to upgrade their Intelligence after consuming a heart or a brain. On the other hand, Will was similar to Intelligence, and Will was not affected by consuming internal organs of mutated beasts.

Luo Yuan felt depressed, but Wang Shishi had not noticed anything. She was too busy looking around and jumping from time to time.

"I can feel the Earth rotating!" she suddenly said.

Luo Yuan felt strange at first, but he reacted very fast. "What? Did you say that you can feel the earth spinning? Impossible!"

"I have no idea how, but I really can feel it!" Wang Shishi looked confused.

"Try to describe it," Luo Yuan said.

"It's quite difficult to describe. I feel like I'm moving forward at a very high speed." Wang Shishi looked scared.

"Is the feeling always there, or does it come and go?" Luo Yuan asked seriously.

"I can only feel it when I focus," Wang Shishi said after some thought.

Wang Shishi was really lucky that the Wisdom Heart had worked on her. It was a very rare thing to happen. Based on the system, evolution did not take place when the system deemed someone as extremely weak.



However, Luo Yuan did not look happy. He was frowning and looking very serious. Obviously, that was not good. The Earth rotated at 465 km/hr, which was a scary speed that was supposed to make people feel weak. It didn't matter if Wang Shishi could use that power or not, the fact alone that she could connect with such a dangerous speed put her in an extremely dangerous situation. She could even die if she made any careless mistakes.

"Listen, don't try to explore that power again. Don't even pay attention to it. I don't want you to be thrown out in space by the centrifugal force or be squashed by the air pressure," Luo Yuan told her strictly.

Wang Shishi felt scared by Luo Yuan's advice. She immediately got over the excitement of obtaining a new power and said, "I understand, Brother Luo. I won't do it anymore."

## Chapter 239: Rainstorm

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The weather was really hot after they finished their lunch, but there were several gray clouds covering the sky. After more than 20 days of drought, it seemed like it was going to rain.

The sky was dark by 3 p.m. and thick clouds were wallowing in the air. The backdrop was black, but lightning was flashing across every once in awhile. The thunder sounded like the roar of the giants. A cool wind was flowing through the hole, soothing everyone's mind.

The wind outside the cave was getting stronger, causing the bushes in the forest to produce strange sounds. All the trees and bushes were bending here and there, blown by the strong wind. From time to time, they could hear the sound of tree branches breaking.

Sand and dried leaves swirled in the air like horses out of control. At times, the strong gusts of wind would turn into a tornado. The dark clouds were moving closer to ground, blocking the peaks of the mountains nearby as the wind got even stronger. The sky was barely visible as sand and stone flew around..

"Hurry up!" Luo Yuan shouted so loud, his veins bulged under his skin.

A few of the men were trying hard to push a 10-ton rock towards the entrance of the cave. The tornado was swirling around the walkway of the cliff, producing a sound similar to a wailing ghost.

The wind was so strong that many of them could not even stand properly.

One of the soldiers looked completely exhausted. Unable to steady his footsteps, he almost fell.

Luo Yuan quickly grabbed him, and said, "Watch out!"

The soldier was shocked. He still looked pale, but he tried to be more alert. The entrance was 50-60 meters above the ground, which was about 16 floors high. It would be difficult for him to survive if he fell.

"Stop! That's the spot," Luo Yuan said.

Everyone felt slightly relieved as they carefully flipped the giant rock over, and then ran inside the cave. They hid in a corner, all of them looking very pale. Dust and dried leaves were blown into the cave, making it dusty to the point that no one could even see clearly.

"We ran out of time. That's all we could do at such short notice. Hope it helps." Luo Yuan sighed as he looked at the huge entrance and the giant rock, which was not blocking it completely.

The entrance was too big, although it might have been a bit small for the Giants. They might have needed to lower their heads before entering the cave. In fact, the entrance was about five meters tall and 150 centimeters wide. The giant rock was less than two meters

tall and three meters wide, even though it weighed more than 10 tons. It did not even block a quarter of the entrance.

Of course, the main purpose of the rock was not to block the wind, but act as protection if someone was blown away.

"What the f\*ck! This is the Kunlun Alps! Where did this wind come from? Even the typhoons along the coast where I used to live were not this strong!" Huo Dong cursed as he used his hands to cover his face. He was trying to protect it from the leaves slapping it.

Everyone was hiding in the corner in the cave, looking at the gray clouds in the sky.

"The coast is gone," Lin Xiaoji tried to remind him, but the strong wind rushed into his mouth as soon as he opened it.

Stunned, Huo Dong sighed. It was true. The coast was gone, and the place they were at now had become the new coast. Suddenly, a dark shadow hit the entrance of the cave, producing a very loud sound. The ground shook vigorously and part of the cliff near the entrance collapsed, the rocks falling to the ground. In the meantime, the walls inside the cave had begun to crack.

It was hard to avoid. Everyone looked frightened and pale except Luo Yuan.

"What was that?" Huang Jiahui asked.

"A tree branch," Luo Yuan said seriously.

He could identify it clearly, even though it was very dark. It had not been a small branch either, but a branch with 40-50 centimeters worth of sub-branches. That big of a branch would have been considered a tree before the mutation outbreak.

Luo Yuan felt depressed. "A wind able to break such a big branch from a mutated tree and swirl a few tons of tree branches into the air must be extremely strong. Definitely beyond Level 12. The natural environment seems to have gotten worse as the glaciers on the South and North pole melt and the solar storms in space cause major disturbances to the global weather," he silently analyzed.

A moment later, the thunderstorms merged with the rainstorms, numerous bolts of lightning formed a bright web on the sky. Perhaps the solar storms were causing electrical charges to enter the ozone layer, because the lightning seemed much more powerful than usual. Everyone was tense as they looked at the fearsome sky.

The last thunderstorm had not been long ago, and the lightning reminded them of their previous experience. This lightning seemed quite normal in terms of frequency and power compared to the previous one that was much more destructive. Still, although it was not as powerful as the last one, it was still enough to stress them out.

Luo Yuan felt mortal. He was worried, even though he knew he

could be more powerful than he was now. Perhaps the drought had lasted for too long, and that was what had caused such a big rainstorm.

The rainwater entered the cave by following the wind. In just a few seconds, a big water puddle had formed in front of them. Suddenly, something heavy fell, making a very loud sound. Some rocks had fallen off the cliff, causing minor landslides.

The atmosphere inside the cave was stress inducing, and no one was talking. They could hear themselves taking deep breaths over the sound of the wind blowing.

The rainstorm lasted for about five hours. The sky was completely dark as the rain slowly subsided. Luo Yuan walked towards the entrance through a water puddle that almost reached his knees. He could see that the lawn was gone and had been replaced by a borderless swamp.

The forest looked like a mess after the storm, and most of the trees in the area had fallen. Some of them had been pulled out from the ground along with their roots and thrown against other trees. Several areas were completely bald and empty of trees.

However, Luo Yuan was not happy. The rain had been extremely destructive, although there had not been a lot of water in the area. The growth of plants had been restricted due to the drought, but the rainstorm could have caused major changes to them. The mutated beasts that had gone away might also come back again now that they would not have to worry about a water shortage.

"This place is getting more dangerous. We need to leave as soon as possible," Luo Yuan thought.

However, there were also some upsides to the rainstorm. The heat had been blown away, and now everyone could enjoy the cool, wet air. Luo Yuan turned around and walked back to the cave, savoring the feeling of the cool breeze against his face.

## Chapter 240: Moss

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The situation was far worse than Luo Yuan had expected. The next morning, when he walked out of the cave, what he saw was endless greenery. The flood had mostly dissipated.

There were several new mildly-flowing streams in the forest, and the grass that had been frequently pruned had grown a few inches taller, reaching a child's height overnight. Thousands of strange insects were flying happily between the grass, the whole area looking vibrant.

The messy scene in the forest the previous day had disappeared without a trace. The forest had not been destroyed. On the contrary, it seemed to have gotten even more green, the space cleared by the storm occupied by new branches. These new branches looked weak and fragile. Their leaves might not have fully opened yet, but they seemed like they could not wait to conquer their new territory.

Luo Yuan was overwhelmed by the vigorous forest in front of him. He would have thought that it was an illusion caused by the storm if he had not seen the landslide by the entrance.

The growth rate of the plants was too fast, even though it had just been one night. If the storm had gone on for ten days, the impact would have been unimaginable. Plants were at the bottom of the ecosystem, so if there was any change on them, the whole ecological chain would be highly impacted.



Luo Yuan was worried. He looked around for a while before returning to the cave. Everyone inside was cleaning up the moss. After the flood had dissipated, the rock on the ground had been fully covered by moss. It was disgusting, and it could also attract a lot of insects. Therefore, early in the morning, everyone had gotten busy cleaning it up. It had turned out to be far more difficult to clean up than they'd expected, because they did not have the right tools.

In addition, there was a kind of biological property to the moss. It would stick closely to the ground once injured, thus increasing the difficulty of the cleaning process. They had been trying to get rid of it for a couple of hours, but only a small portion had been cleaned up. The most troublesome part was its roots, which were latched onto the rock, making it very hard to eradicate. As long as there was a tiny bit of moisture, it would grow back again the next day.

Luo Yuan watched for a while before he suggested, "This way takes too long. It doesn't have to be this hard. All plants are afraid of fire. Once the firewood outside is dry, you guys can burn it and clean the moss."

He was now a lot quicker to think and could come up with new ideas easily. Stunned, everyone dropped the stones in their hands and looked at each other. What Luo Yuan had suggested was very simple and efficient, but surprisingly none of them had been able to think of it.

In fact, they had been blinded by their common sense and caught in the inertia of thinking. If moss grew in an average person's

house, their first thought would certainly be to shovel it out rather than light a fire to burn it. That was an abnormal reaction as setting the house on fire was not as easy as it sounded. It was just that a fire would leave behind smoke and ash, which tends to irritate most people.

However, after the apocalypse, the whole world had become perilous and unpredictable. One could be killed at any time, so focusing on these details was equal to committing suicide. Ensuring their own survival had to be their first priority.

Suddenly, Chen Jiayi screamed.

"Ahhhhh!"

Huang Jiahui, who was standing beside her, took a look and said in shock, "Luo Yuan, come and see!"

Frowning, Luo Yuan quickly went over and asked, "What's wrong?"

"Look at her thumb!" Huang Jiahui said.

As he looked at her hand, Luo Yuan's heart grew heavy. He saw a piece of green moss growing on her thumb. It was about the size of a one-cent coin, and looked like a stain from afar.

He grabbed her hand and touched it gently. When the moss was stimulated, it contracted deeply into her skin, leaving only a trace

of light green on the smooth surface. There were no penetration holes. Other than the strange color, it looked almost the same as normal skin, only smoother and moister, as if coated with a layer of cream.

By now, everyone had gathered around. When they saw the mutation on Chen Jiayi's hand, they were shocked and quickly started checking their own exposed skin. None of them found any abnormalities. They were really relieved. No one would have thought that ordinary moss could be so dangerous.

"When did it happen?" Luo Yuan asked Chen Jiayi.

"I... I don't know, I just felt a bit itchy on my finger..." Chen Jiayi looked pale and her whole body shivered.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan's heart pumped faster. The green spot had grown bigger in only a moment, covering her whole finger. Will had limited destructive power on plants, and considering that it was protected by a layer of skin, it would be less effective to remove the moss that way. However, that seemed to be the sole solution at the moment. Luo Yuan would rather give it a try than do nothing.

He concentrated his Will, his hands instantly lighting up with a layer of mist as he took Chen Jiayi's palm. It took just one touch for Chen Jiayi to almost faint. She looked very pale.

"Jiayi, how do you feel?" Huang Jiahui said quickly.

The two young boys, who had a close relationship with Chen Jiayi, stood to the side with a nervous expression on their faces. They dared not say a word before the group of adults.

Chen Jiayi's face turned white quickly. She was getting so weak that she was unable to stand. It seemed like she wanted to say something, but nothing came out of her mouth.

Luo Yuan sensed something strange and quickly checked Chen Jiayi's hand. His facial expression changed fast. The piece of moss had moved past her finger and spread quickly, covering her entire hand and extending to her arm. In barely a second, it had almost covered her whole arm, the speed of its growth was alarming to say the least.

"Damn!"

Luo Yuan quickly dissipated his Will and picked up Chen Jiayi's hand. He lifted her sleeve, only to realize that most of her arm had turned green.

Everyone looked at Chen Jiayi's greenish arm in suspense.

Luo Yuan's heart felt heavy. He had not expected the moss to be so tough. It had not been killed by Will. Instead, it had grown rapidly in an attempt to overcome the threat.

Now there was only one solution left.

"Everyone please go out, except the women," Luo Yuan commanded coolly.

They all could sense what he meant and felt sad about what was about to happen. However, this seemed to be the best solution at this point. At least she could still survive.

All men walked out of the cave quickly. Once they had left, Luo Yuan took off Chen Jiayi's clothes and threw them on the floor.

Chen Jiayi had been well-nourished all this time, so she had become chubbier, her body maturing in advance.

Although she was very pale, she suddenly blushed at the thought of being naked in front of a crowd, especially in front of Luo Yuan. Her body trembled with nervousness, looking like a frightened deer. Luo Yuan only took a glance, trying to avoid her eyes, Zhao Yali could not bear it. It seemed like she wanted to speak out, but she was pulled back by Wang Xianguang.

"Close your eyes for a while. It will be okay," Luo Yuan told Chen Jiayi gently as he took out his Zhanmadao. By that time, the moss had spread to her upper arm.

Chen Jiayi's blushing face turned pale once again. Her lips trembled as tears started to fall down her cheeks. She was only twelve years old. She would normally still have been in middle school, yet now she had to bear this kind of pain.

Luo Yuan sighed. He picked up her hand and gripped the knife handle, preparing to chop it off. When the silvery long knife was about to fall, a strong fear filled Chen Jiayi's heart, making it throb.

"No... No..." she whimpered, starting to struggle.

"Don't be afraid. The pain will only last for a while. It's fine to live without an arm," Huang Jiahui quickly tried to comfort her.

"I'm begging you, please don't cut my arm. I don't want to be a cripple," Chen Jiayi suddenly shouted, blubbering. She was having an emotional breakdown.

After all, she was only a twelve-year-old girl. No matter how strong she had been until then, she was still not mature enough.

"If we don't cut your arm, you'll die. Don't be afraid, the wound will heal soon," Huang Jiahui advised her.

However, Chen Jiayi was too emotional. She did not respond, she just kept crying. The best time to cut her arm had passed, and the moss had begun to spread through her blood. Before, the green color had just been limited to her arms, but now it had slowly spread to her chest, stomach, and face.

Luo Yuan noticed this and sighed. He reluctantly stopped. He had no other solutions now. The moss had spread to Chen Jiayi's whole body. There was no hope of curing her anymore. He slowly

inserted his knife back into its sheath. He had kind of liked this little girl. She had been adorable and sensible, always eager to help with cooking and cleaning. She had been more active than anyone else.

Several women had also noticed the scene, and their facial expressions had changed. Some of them even cried for a time, the atmosphere becoming quiet.

Huang Jiahui could not help but ask, "Is there nothing else we can do?"

"She might not have much time left," Luo Yuan whispered, shaking his head. Then he picked up her clothes and dressed her carefully. Chen Jiayi had stopped crying. She just looked numb.

"Uncle Luo, am I dying?" she asked suddenly after getting dressed.

Luo Yuan hesitated for a while before he finally nodded. "Everyone dies. Some people just die earlier than others. Do you have any last wishes?"

Dying was the scariest thing in the world for everyone, even more so for a little girl. Chen Jiayi shivered and covered her mouth tightly as tears started to fall down her face again.

"Before you do, go talk to your friends outside," Luo Yuan told her softly. He was feeling uneasy too.

Chen Jiayi nodded. She kept crying as she walked step by step towards the door. The sun had risen outside, and the sunlight shone down on her body, the moss in it coming to the surface once again.

Chen Jiayi looked down at her body, standing still for some time. Suddenly, she seemed to feel a trace of joy, and a shallow smile appeared on her pale desperate face.

The moss accelerated, spreading to her whole body under the sunlight. It did not take long for it to cover her entire body. Everyone gathered around her, holding their breath without realizing it.



## Chapter 241: Symbiosis

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As time passed, the sun got hotter. Chen Jiayi, who had been exposed to the sunlight, stood still, as if she had been petrified.

Only when Wang Shishi called her, did she finally react. It was like she had suddenly come alive again.

She remained stunned for a while, but she quickly turned her body. Her face was covered in moss, and her senses seemed fuzzy. She looked at everyone in surprise through a pair of bright, dark eyes.

Everyone subconsciously took a step back and looked at her in terror. So did her friends, Deng Chao and Zhong Chujiang.

Chen Jiayi's bright eyes instantly dimmed. She felt concerned and inferior to everybody else.

Luo Yuan noticed her reaction with relief. It was a normal reaction to have, so that meant that she had not lost her sanity yet. She was different from a mutated human.

"How do you feel now?"

"My body is warm and comfortable. I'm just a little bit thirsty," Chen Jiayi answered his question quickly.

She did not dare lie to Luo Yuan. She replied honestly, although she was still in panic. She had seen the fate of Chen Xianfeng, and she thought it might be her turn now. She had been abandoned once though, and she did not want to be abandoned again.

"It seems like photosynthesis might be possible," Luo Yuan thought. He turned to Wang Shishi and said, "Please go get a glass of water."

Wang Shishi quickly went to get it.

Luo Yuan turned to Chen Jiayi again. She was too young to know how to hide her emotions yet, so everything was shown clearly on her face. He could see that she was afraid, so he tried to comfort her, "Don't be afraid, I just want to understand your condition."

Noticing that Chen Jiayi seemed a little relieved, Luo Yuan went on to ask, "Are you able to keep this thing inside your body?"

"You mean the moss?" she asked, freezing for a moment. When she saw Luo Yuan nod, she closed her eyes and soon all the moss was sucked back in, exposing her pale green skin.

She seemed somewhat thinner. Apparently, the parasite had consumed some of her fat, but the most eye-catching thing on her was her skin, which had become so smooth, it was slightly reflective under the sun.

That, in combination with her strange color, made her exude a

mysterious charm. Even Luo Yuan could not help but stare at her.

He was amazed. This was the first time he had seen such a phenomenon. Not only had the parasite not killed her, but it had also formed a symbiotic relationship with her. Perhaps this only happened with plants that caused a mild effect.

He had to check if it was infectious though, because he did not fancy walking around in green skin. Luo Yuan tried to use his identification technique, but the results were quite rigid. The information categorized her as a normal female, so he had to use an indirect method.

"You can re-release the moss now," he said.

Chen Jiayi nodded obediently. Soon, the moss had reappeared on her body. She actually seemed to enjoy this state. Even her eyes were shining.

"Take some moss back!" Luo Yuan said.

Chen Jiayi did not refuse. She reluctantly pulled a cluster from her body. The moss seemed to be stimulated as the part in that area was pulled back quickly, retracting inside her body until it was re-exposed again.

Luo Yuan was careful not to touch the moss. He let her sit on the ground before he used the identification technique again.

"Parasitic Green Moss"

"Rarity: Light Blue"

"Weight: 3 grams"

"Status: Parasite"

"Additional Abilities: None"

"Remarks: This is a rare parasite that can survive on its own. It can have a perfect symbiosis with species with a specific blood type, and is able to slightly improve the host's main attributes. The parasitic green moss loses its parasitic aspects after becoming a parasite for the first time, and does not regain them until after the death of its host. "

When he realized that the green moss had no more parasitic properties, Luo Yuan relaxed around Chen Jiayi.

When Huang Jiahui saw him attempt to touch the green moss though, she stopped him, "Don't touch it!"

"It's alright," Luo Yuan waved her off as he picked up the moss and rubbed it gently. That cluster of moss was still considerably lively. When stimulated, it immediately curled up into a ball.

"Don't worry, I have the ability to identify some biological

elements. Once this thing becomes a parasite, it has no parasitic properties anymore. Except for the weird skin color, there is no other impact on Chen Jiayi's characteristics, which is certainly a good thing."

In fact, most of them had known that Luo Yuan had this ability, but they'd never had confirmation. Now that he had finally acknowledged it, everyone was relieved.

Chen Jiayi was the most excited among the group. She had been very nervous that she'd be judged by her companions, yet now that the judge had pronounced her innocent, the stone on her heart had finally been moved away, and she started crying tears of joy.

When she calmed down again, Luo Yuan tested her Strength, Dexterity and other capabilities. Last but not least, he tested her self-healing ability. After getting her consent, he cut her arm slightly with his knife.

He found that her Strength and Dexterity had reached the same level as Huang Jiahui's. Considering that she was only twelve years old, and thus not mature enough yet, this was a huge improvement.

What surprised Luo Yuan the most though, was her self-healing ability and the defensive ability of her skin. When he'd cut her, he had clearly felt resistance against his knife. He had discovered that underneath her skin there was a dense network of light green filaments. The gap between the filaments was barely visible, yet it was connected very closely to her skin.

Even Luo Yuan did not have such good defense.

What was even more surprising, was that after the wound had been made, she had not bled much. When the knife had left her skin, the countless filaments within it had begun to form bonds with each other. After half a minute, he'd wiped the blood on her arm only to find that her wound had disappeared, leaving behind only a shallow trail of blood.

Her self-healing ability was even faster than Lin Xiaoji's. Luo Yuan subconsciously glanced at Lin Xiaoji, who was standing among the group, and found that his face looked gloomy.

However, Luo Yuan was clear on the fact that this self-healing was just an illusion. It would basically force a wound to close, which was certainly not the same as truly healing.

Still, the parasitic effect was extremely powerful, especially considering that it was only a light blue level parasitic moss. Chen Jiayi's potential to improve was enormous. She could generally be compared to a normal mutated human.

Of course, she'd have to bear with the green skin and the strange looks she'd get from others.

When Luo Yuan proposed to have everyone try the parasite, he had not expected anyone to agree. However, their answers surprised him. The few soldiers who had experienced the brutality of the battlefield wanted in, and Cao Lin and Huang Jiahui also

wanted to try.

He seriously had underestimated the desire of ordinary people to become powerful. During the cruel era of the apocalypse, the stress and mental depression the average person experienced while trying survive was something no one could understand. In that devastating environment, no one was concerned about their skin color. That was a trivial matter as long as they could become stronger. People would even turn into monsters so long as they did not lose their minds.

Unfortunately, it was not so easy with parasites. Even if someone cut themselves and stuffed the moss into the wound, the moss might not want to take root there.

According to the identification information, it seemed like the moss required a specific blood type in order to become a parasite.

The storm the previous day had not affected the temperature. It was still about 50 degrees at noon. The forest, which had been fully nourished overnight, was exposed to the heat, causing a transpiration phenomenon. The air above the woodland was extremely distorted, making everyone feel as if they were hallucinating.

However, that high temperature felt quite pleasant to Chen Jiayi, who sat directly under the hot sun and did not move an inch from nine in the morning, except to drink water a few times. She did not even have lunch.

Perhaps it was a side effect from the parasitic moss, but she kind of acted like a plant. Unless someone woke her up, she could easily just sit there for hours.

Under the high temperature, their firewood dried up by noon. It was all moved into the cave by the group, piled up like a hill. Luo Yuan took out his lighter to burn it.

The fire was soon alight, the flames going directly to the top of the cave. The moss caught up in flames instantly burned to death.

The moss around the edges seemed to sense the danger and quickly compressed into a thin layer, sticking closely to the ground as it crept toward the dark corners, trying to escape from the high temperature.

Still, its movement was apparently too slow, because it only took a short time for it to dry up and become yellow, completely losing its vitality.

While all this happened, Chen Jiayi had still not moved an inch or reacted in any way.



## Chapter 242: Decision

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On the dawn of the fifth day, the sky was still dark. Luo Yuan was meditating in front of the main door when he suddenly heard a familiar sound. The sound was very soft, but luckily he was sensitive enough to hear it.

He immediately grew excited and got up from the ground. He quickly walked a few steps and looked up at the sky in the distance. There were about eight tiny black spots moving around in the sky. The surface of the objects was not shiny, so he could not identify what exactly they were. However, the black spots produced some sounds that Luo Yuan could confirm belonged to airplanes.

"Finally, you're here again." He tried to calm down as he observed the flying route of the planes, instantly forming a 3D graphic pattern in his head.

He was calculating the direction of their activity in his mind while recalling the draft Commander Xia had made. He realized both were quite similar, but the angle was slightly different. However, his thoughts were not conclusive. The location of the airport might not be the same after all. All the data he had used in his speculations were based on his observations only.

From a certain aspect, Commander Xia's judgment could be more accurate as he was an officer who had graduated from military school. Knowledge was not everything, though. Sometimes experience mattered more.

His calculations might not be perfect, especially considering that there were so many people in the rehabilitation area. The compound was not small by any means, so the activity area was probably a lot bigger than the compound. As long as there was not too big of a difference, it was not a big deal. Otherwise, they could go in the wrong direction and waste their time. Luo Yuan checked the time and realized it was only 3 a.m. He decided not to wake the others.

He just looked at the sky in worry. He realized the situation at the current location was getting worse. Five days after the rainstorm, there were already 10 times more mutants in the forest than there had used to be.

There had been about the same quantity of mutated beasts before the drought, but there were a lot more insects and birds now. Similarly, the desert before the apocalypse had turned into a green field with flowers after the heavy rain. Many living things would come alive and reproduce within that short period, most lives only getting a few days of opportunity.

That was the miracle of life and its perseverance during tough times.

Apparently, their current situation was quite similar. Insects lay eggs in massive amounts after the rain, the eggs hatching after only a few days of incubation. It was still bearable during the night, but it became really scary in the daytime, when the insects would fly in the sky. Sometimes, they could not even see the sky because of the insects blocking their vision. The worst thing was that the insects attracted more birds, because they were their main

food source.

The power and body size of the newborn insects was still weak, so they were mostly white level mutants. They could currently see numerous insects flying here and there around the field before the cliff. If the insects were as big as a human palm, then the birds who would hunt them would be extremely scary.

The mutated birds were only as big as foal eagles, but they could move very fast and they were very flexible, so they were able to move rapidly in small spaces. Luo Yuan's battle beasts did not even dare challenge them. If they appeared in a big group, their characteristics could be extreme.

Luo Yuan did not know what their problem was, but something very bad must have happened before, because when the giant ape became aware of their existence, a few hundred mutated birds rushed down from the sky and started pecking on its body. In the end, no one had won the battle.

Many of the mutated birds had died and the giant ape had gotten injured. Of course, those were only minor injuries, but the ape still did not dare challenge those birds anymore.

Luo Yuan stood in the dark for a while before returning to the cave and sitting down. There was a thick layer of tiny worms on the floor that were about the size of rice. He heard a weird, annoying sound as he stepped on them. Those were the carcasses of the insects which had been trying to get close to the cave.

However, Luo Yuan was not the one who had killed them. It had been the Zhanmadao.

Weapons were very important for a soldier or a fighter. The Zhanmadao was getting smarter as Luo Yuan used his Will to increase its power over time. Even though it was just inserted into the ground, it was powerful enough to keep the insects away. They would try to avoid it once they got five to six meters away from it. That was actually the best case scenario. When other living things besides Luo Yuan tried to get close to it, the Zhanmadao would usually release an aggressive, powerful force. That was how the insects had died.

Sometimes, Luo Yuan felt as if the saber was alive and was transforming into another person. He actually looked forward to that day, but right now the saber was still like a newborn baby. Perhaps, it would miraculously come alive at some point in the future.

There were less than two hours to go until dawn, but Luo Yuan did not plan on meditating anymore. He was thinking about the resources they would need to prepare for their departure. He had decided to leave that place the next day. They would have to go sooner or later, so they might as well depart earlier. If they took too long, they might not be able to leave anymore when they wanted to go.

There were very few things to pack, so there was not much to think about. With his Intelligence, Luo Yuan could have thought over the same issue a few times in a second.

However, he actually felt stressed as he thought about how lucky they had been. They had not encountered any danger, because they had been staying in the cave. He did not believe things would be as peaceful for long if they left. Kunlun Mountain was a mysterious forest after all.

Luo Yuan could not predict what would happen along the journey. However, when he recalled those giant, powerful monsters in the lake, he immediately felt a massive pressure rushing to his face.

Although his power had been upgraded, his Dexterity and Intelligence had just increased by one point. His power had increased a few more times, but he was still not confident enough to kill a green level mutated beast. Although there was only a small gap between blue and green mutated beasts, the difficulty in killing them was really different.

If living creatures below green level were normal, and those above green level were evolved, Luo Yuan speculated that they would possess certain superpowers aside from their strength.

For example, the giant lizard could blow flames, but that was just the flammable liquid secreted from its special inner organs. From certain aspects, it was similar to spitting, but totally different from the soul absorption superpower or the mountain and water dividing power.

He had been lucky enough to manage to kill the Flood Dragon at the time as it had died before it could fully utilize its powers. However, he would not be that lucky every single time. Perhaps he

might need to fight a mutated beast that possessed a superpower.  
Luo Yuan grew very serious as he thought about that.

## Chapter 243: Departure

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Luo Yuan was idling for almost an hour and the sky was slowly getting brighter. Everyone woke up one by one. He waved at them after they finished washing their faces and said, "Hey guys, come here!"

Everyone was stunned and then walked towards Luo Yuan.

"What's up, Brother Luo?" Huo Dong asked.

Luo Yuan remained silent for a second and then said, "Let's discuss our departure date."

"Where are we going? Are you thinking about going to the rehabilitation center?" Commander Xia asked. He was nervous as he saw Luo Yuan nodded. Commander Xia's attitude was the most firm amongst the group as his family members were all in the rehabilitation center. Unlike the rest, they would not worry too much. He assumed that the list of dead soldiers would have been sent to his house by now as he has been missing for such a long time. Every time he thought about the fact that his wife may be grieving his death, he felt anxious and extremely uncomfortable.

"When are we leaving?" Huang Jiahui asked.

Luo Yuan continued, "The situation here is getting dangerous, I feel we should leave as soon as possible."

"Brother Luo, it's your call. We will just follow you." Huo Dong immediately expressed as he knew he could not change Luo Yuan's mind once he decided on something.

The rest quickly nodded as they saw Luo Yuan look at them.

"Alright, let's depart today then!" Luo Yuan said firmly.

There were not many things they could bring along except the bare necessities. Other than a few bags of water and about 20 kilograms of salt, they also brought some high quality smoked meat for emergency. However, the pots and containers were left behind as they were not as important as the food and water. They could make new ones as long as there are rocks and wood.

They were all ready to depart at 7 a.m. They climbed up to the back of the giant lizard and then departed.

Insects crowded the sky but they fell onto the ground when they were 40-50 meters away from them. Of course, did those because of Luo Yuan will. He did not even have to use his full power to cause such an effect. In fact, it was not even 1/10 of his power. However, that was more than enough to kill those tiny insects.

Everyone looked depressed and anxious, and some even looked pale. The brambles and bushes along the journey were squashed by the huge feet of the giant lizard as they slowly went further and further away from the cave. Soon, the cave had disappeared from their vision. Furthermore, as the pathway began to look more foreign to them as they went further away, they began to feel



melancholic and extremely anxious.

The sunshine penetrated the lush greenery and left some light shadows on the ground. The hot light beams became slightly cooler after a few layers of filtration from the neighbouring leaves. However, that comfortable moment would only last for one to two hours in the early morning.

The temperature eventually shot up to about 20 degrees Celsius during the noon even they were under the shade. At that point, even the wind was burning hot and they could not avoid sweating profusely. Other than Luo Yuan, the rest would need to drink water every hour to rehydrate themselves.

The giant gorilla did not follow them on the land since the forest is their paradise. Its body continuously jumped from one big tree to another with a strong wind following it wherever it went. Fortunately, almost all the trees there were big and strong enough to support it, otherwise, they would have collapsed due to the heavy weight from the giant gorilla.

It stopped and waited for them to catch up once in awhile, and then continued to leap from tree to tree again. It certainly had a lot of fun in the forest.

"Big King Kong! Get some fruits for me!" Wang Shishi suddenly shouted and pointed at her mouth with a biting action.

The giant gorilla frowned and blinked its eyes at her like it really understood what she had said. It scratched its head and then

‘boom’- it disappeared. It had jumped to the big tree on its left and disappeared after a few leaps.

"Do you think it got the message?" Luo Yuan asked. Since he brought him back, he did not actually teach it anything. It had spent time more with Wang Shishi and Huo Dong.

"I have no idea, but I guess it understands some simple words." Wang Shishi said uncertainly.

"Brother Luo, don't underestimate that fella! It is as smart as a human! You just need to teach it once and it will get the message." Huo Dong said while laughing.

"Indeed. This is the smartest mutated beast I've ever seen. Even the military dogs can't compete with it. Of course, giants are in a different league." Commander Xia said seriously.

After about 10 minutes, Luo Yuan heard some sounds.

"It's back!" Luo Yuan said while hoping to see something.

They heard some sounds as well.

The bushes were shaking vigorously with a sound-‘bomm,bomm,bomm’. The sound was getting louder as something gradually came nearer to them. In a few seconds, the giant gorilla appeared on a big tree on their left. There were many fruits inside its arms and some fell from the air as they slipped from its arms.

A force gathered all the fruits before they fell onto the ground and the fruits were basically floating in the air. The whole bunch of fruits were then swirled up to the back of the giant lizard and formed a small hill. Every single fruit was as big as a normal bowl and was wrapped by a thick dark red shell. It looked like a walnut but was bigger and heavier than that. It weighed about a kilogram on average.

"Is this edible?" Huang Jiahui asked happily as she looked at Luo Yuan.

After Luo Yuan did the necessary identification, he said, "Yes, it's edible."

The shell was very hard that Luo Yuan needed to use 50% of his strength to open it. There was something that looked like pink jelly with liquid inside. The fragrance spread around the place and made everyone drool. Luo Yuan finished the jelly in just a mouthful.

It tasted sweet and sour with a minty cool feeling. That made him feel great under the hot weather. As expected, the rest were not as strong as him and they had to use their own knives to open the fruit. The whole fruit easily split into two after a cut as the knives had been modified by Luo Yuan and its material was the bones of the dead giant weird bird. Every single knife in the group is a light green level weapon.

As his power has been continuously increasing, he no longer

hides his power anymore. Besides that, there were so many modified weapons swinging in front of them, there was no point to hide it. Even if they tell someone else, he was no longer afraid as people would just try to please him instead of being his enemy.

He thought of it like a kid holding a block of gold in a big crowd. The kid would die soon because the kid is weak. However, if it were a muscular guy then the danger is relatively low. And if there is a long knife tied at his waist, then he is totally fine.

"Delicious!" Wang Shishi said. She immediately opened another one.

Fruits were rare to find during the end of the world. Furthermore, because it was very dangerous in the forest, no one would intentionally hunt for fruits. It was also rare to find an edible one along the journey. Luo Yuan ate a good number of fruits until he felt full.

"Here, take it." Huang Jiahui looked at Chen Jiayi who was sitting alone at the side and then passed her a little.

Chen Jiayi quickly turned around and looked at the fruit for a moment. She kept quiet at first and only after a while, she responded, "Oh! Thanks, Sister Huang. I'm good."

"You don't like eating fruits?" Huang Jiahui asked.

"Hmm, I have no idea. I feel like I'm no longer a fan." She

thought and then replied.

Huang Jiahui sighed. Since the moss had become a parasite on Chen Jiayi, she was getting more alike to a plant. She often idled under the sun and did not eat much. Sometimes, she did not eat anything for a few days. She would reluctantly eat some food when there were some high-quality meats available. No one knows whether the changes are good or not.

# Chapter 244: Gigantic Beast

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Although the giant lizard is huge, its 15-point dexterity allowed it to move quickly even when it was traveling at a slow speed.

Luo Yuan made markings on trees every time they passed a hill as the topography of the area was too complicated. They had occasionally gone in circles as it was easy to get lost in the forest, especially if they do not check their map properly.

The giant lizard entered a valley at around 1 p.m. There were cliffs on the both sides of the valley surrounded by strange rocks. The valley was very deep and they realized the ground was uneven.

The weather there was very humid and a thick fog surrounded the area even in the afternoon. There was a big bush of giant leaves and there were many gaps between the leaves.

"Look, Brother Luo! Is that footprint?" Huo Dong suddenly asked in a shocked voice.

Luo Yuan quickly looked where Huo Dong was pointing at and his expression changed immediately. He saw a couple of giant marks on the ground which were about two meters in width. It was just about 10 meters in front of them. The giant pits were about a meter deep and the patterns around them looked like claws. Obviously, it was footprint!

Luo Yuan quickly instructed the giant lizard to stop. He looked extremely tensed as even the marine mutated beasts which he had

seen before did not possess such big footprints. Even the footprints of the giant lizard were much smaller.

He could not imagine how big the creature could be. Everyone looked pale and panic.

"Should we try to avoid this area?" Huang Jiahui suddenly asked.

Luo Yuan shook his head and replied, "This area is full of hills, we have no idea how long it will take if we detour." The giant lizard could not climb on the steep slopes of the hills, that is one of its limitations. Normal slopes were still fine but anything above 45 degrees and it could not do anything.

"We actually don't have to be too worried. For a beast of this size, even the giant lizard will seem like a small cat to it. We will be fine as long as we manage to escape carefully." Luo Yuan pondered and said.

"Luo Yuan, I think we better not take the risk. We would rather walk a few days longer than have to encounter such dangers." Huang Jiahui tried to convince him after she glanced again at the footprints. She even gulped some saliva as the enormous footprints were too scary to her. She could imagine the actual size of the mutated beast and predicted that the giant lizard might die if it gets stepped on by the gigantic beast.

Luo Yuan looked at the rest and realized they were all nervous. It was apparent that Huang Jiahui was not the only one who wanted to take a detour. Most of them had been frightened by the giant

footprints. Luo Yuan wanted to speak but hesitated as he felt he has overlooked something.

"There is an order in the food chain of nature. Everything is linked together in a perfect pyramid. If the gigantic beast is a carnivore, most of the animals nearby would have been eaten by now." Luo Yuan pondered.

He suddenly raised his head and looked at the tree above the nearest footprints. It seemed that his assumption was right! Most of the crowns of the trees within 100 meters of them were gone. Apparently, it was an herbivore! Luo Yuan quickly told them about his discovery and everyone immediately felt relieved. Herbivores are usually less aggressive than carnivores. They normally do not attack if they are not provoked.

Despite his discovery, Luo Yuan instructed the giant lizard to avoid the footprints so that they do not bump into the gigantic beast. It was certainly dangerous if they came near to it even if it was docile.

After walking for about 10 minutes, Luo Yuan realized the ground was vibrating at a certain frequency. It was a slight vibration at the beginning but soon it started getting more vigorous. The giant lizard could be seen puffing out of frustration while the giant gorilla kept very quiet and followed behind the group.

The leaves were swaying back and forth from the strong wind blowing through the valley and they could hear branches snapping. The sound kept getting stronger.



After a few minutes, a shadow as big as a hill walked towards them. They could not see it clearly as the trees were blocking their view. However, they saw four legs which were as big as the cement abutments of a bridge walking slowly towards them. The slow pace refers to the relative speed of its movements, though it was already a lot faster than the giant lizard due to the size of its body.

There were no scales on the surface of its legs. Its skin was rough and there was a thick layer of dead skin that could be seen. Luo Yuan did some analysis and predicted that it would be quite difficult for his Zhanmadao to make any significant impact on its legs.

By peeping through the gaps between the leaves, he found that the gigantic beast was about 10 meters tall! It was like a tower with more than 10 floors and it shocked many of them. It was only about a kilometer away from them at that moment but it just left and disappeared. The only thing that could be heard was the wind. Everyone was stunned for a moment and then continued their journey again. They finally got out from the valley at around 3 pm. There was a sunken pit in front of them right at the exit and they continued to walk for another three hours until the sky was getting dark.

"Let's spend a night here!" Luo Yuan looked around and told the giant lizard to stop.

The trees in the surrounding were of the same species with numerous aerial roots hanging from its branches. It looked like numerous pythons hanging upside down. The lush leaves from the

trees had blocked the sunset and they felt like it was already night time.

Luo Yuan was the first one to jump off the lizard's back. He used the Zhanmadao to cut some of the aerial roots and after that the place immediately looked spacious.

"I feel this place is scary!" Wang Xianguang remarked as she jumped down right after Luo Yuan. She looked around and felt very uncomfortable.

"I feel the same." Wang Shishi said as she kicked the big roots under her feet. They could not see any soil under the big roots that crossed over each other. Besides that, there were no bushes or shrubs below the trees.

"Luo Yuan, is this place dangerous?" Huang Jiahui asked.

"Don't scare yourselves unnecessarily. However, it's better to pay more attention at night." Luo Yuan frowned and said.

He could not explain to them that he felt someone watching them ever since they arrived. The feeling was not clear but it felt almost omnipresent. He was tensed and nervous but he could find anything.

He looked at the sky and decided not to leave at that moment. Perhaps it was just a psychological effect.

# Chapter 245: The Night

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The reason they stopped here was because of the giant tree in front of them which had a natural tree hole. The current standards of a big tree are vastly different from the time before the apocalypse. It was very common to see big trees which had trunks that were one to two meters thick. Only those that were three to four meters thick were considered a big tree nowadays and the tree they found had a six-meter-thick trunk! That was the biggest tree they saw along their journey.

Luo Yuan had removed all the surrounding aerial roots and then told the rest to keep a distance. He walked to the tree hole and released a force which made numerous insects and small animals run out from the hole. That place looked like a mini ecosystem as there were many kinds of insects and small animals there.

Everyone walked over to Luo Yuan after the mutated animals and insects left the tree hole. After removing some humus, the hole looked bigger-it went from two meters to four meters in diameter and formed a space of about 10 square meters. Although the space was not very big, it was enough to fit all of them.

"Flame and light can attract mutated beasts so I think we'd better avoid cooking tonight. Everyone can have some dried meats for a night... we depart immediately when the sky is bright tomorrow." Luo Yuan said carefully.

He still felt that there was something strange in the area so it was better for them not to attract any unnecessary attention for their own safety. Although Luo Yuan did not say it directly, the tone of

his voice already made them feel worried.

Huang Jiahui took out the packets of dried meat and passed them around. She looked at Luo Yuan when she was passing the meat to him. She felt slightly relieved when she saw his calm expression. He was like the doctor of the team... everyone was not afraid to fall sick if he was around as he would be able to help them.

Sometimes she would think to herself... what if she did not get to meet Luo Yuan? She wondered what would happen to her now. However, she guessed that the most likely scenario was that she would be dead. Perhaps, all of them here would have died. It was just their luck to bump into Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan took the dried meat and put a small piece into his mouth and then slowly chewed on it. Since he lost a few of his teeth, he could only chew the food using the other side of his mouth. He has not gotten used to it yet. The smoked meats were as hard as a rock and normal people might need to soak it in water before they could even attempt to eat it. Of course, he did not need it as his body was as strong as mutated beasts which also allowed him to have strong teeth. The dried meat soon became minced meat and was then swallowed.

Within 10 minutes, Luo Yuan was done with dinner. He drank all the water inside the wooden glass and when he was finished, none of them had even started to eat their dinner.

Luo Yuan used his tongue to check the area where he lost his teeth. He had felt that his gums were swollen and painful a few days ago and his teeth were in pain as well. After checking, he

realized four of his new teeth had already started growing and it was incredibly fast! Three days ago, his teeth were still tightly wrapped in his gums, but now it was already protruding out. Based on his estimations, his teeth would be ready to work again in another 10-14 days.

Luo Yuan was happily surprised by that.

Normally people only have two sets of teeth in their lifetime-one when they are born and another which they have until they die. If they were to lose their second set of teeth during adulthood, it would not grow again. However, Luo Yuan seemed to have broken the rules of that theory.

"How about other parts of the body such as the limbs... are they going to grow again if they are broken?" Luo Yuan wondered.

It was very common to lose an arm or a leg during the end of the world. It has happened a lot during their battles. If he can regrow broken limbs, he would get to upgrade his survival ability instead of becoming a disabled person in the event of a severe injury.

After his dinner, Luo Yuan took out the drafted map he had been working on when the sky was still bright. There were some drawings of mountains and rivers on the map as well as a dotted line crossing over the entire map. There was one curved solid line drawn on the map all the way around the dotted line.

"These are the routes we have taken today... let's discuss if there is anything we've missed out." Luo Yuan said as he pointed at the

solid line.

"Gosh! We've only completed such a short journey even after walking the entire day?" Wang Shishi could hold back her frustration. She shouted as she looked at the curvy line, especially the last part of the route which looked like they were walking in the opposite direction.

"Traveling through the mountains is like this... it's impossible to see just straight roads." Huang Jiahui said softly.

"If the giant lizard is strong enough, we might not need to take so many big turns. King Kong is a lot more useful!" Wang Shishi said. She liked the mischievous King Kong more than the scary lizard.

"Alright, let's stop wasting time. Do you have any good ideas?" Luo Yuan raised his head up and asked calmly. Wang Shishi was scared and shied away from his question.

"Brother Luo, the map seems to be very accurate... there is nothing much to add. However, I feel it is not necessary to follow the dotted line if we have a rough idea of the direction we are taking. It should be fine even if we take the route slightly further away from the dotted line. More importantly, we need to leave the area as soon as possible. We will find human footprints once we get out from the mountain and we might be able to find a map." Commander Xia looked at Luo Yuan and said.

By addressing Luo Yuan as 'Brother', the Commander could maintain his status and ego while reserving his power in the

group. However, he has been influenced by the other members over a long period of time and began to address Luo Yuan as 'Brother Luo'. It was a complicated emotional change.

In fact, Luo Yuan was not very dominant but his incredible performances made the rest have some difficulties being calm when interacting with him. Sometimes, their heartbeats would speed up when he frowned and they would start sweating or feel numb when he stared at them slightly longer than normal. Other than the psychological effect, his strong will is also one of the influencing factors. Even if he did not use his will intentionally, the rest did not even dare to think of rebelling.

Luo Yuan pondered and said, "You're right, I was too fussy. We should leave this place first."

Luo Yuan looked at the rest and asked, "Any better ideas?"

Cao Lin held her fists tightly and said bravely, "Since we are not going to stick to the original route, I feel we should follow the river flow. That way we won't have to worry about where to get water and we know that the river flows to a lower area. Thus, we don't have to make any detours and it should be faster. The most important thing is that the water always flows to lower areas so we definitely won't lose our direction if we follow the river."

Luo Yuan pondered again and said, "That's a good idea, but there will be many mutated beasts around the river. It's too dangerous if we simply follow the river."

Luo Yuan then said, "It's quite late now, let's sleep."

"Thanks, Brother Luo." Huo Dong said as he tried to please him.

Luo Yuan did not respond but instead got up from the ground. He pulled out his Zhanmadao and inserted it into the ground in front of the entrance and then sat down with his legs crossed over. He then closed his eyes. The night was finally here.



## Chapter 246: Detour

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The night was still like water, without the slightest hint of movement in the forest, not even light. Everyone was hiding in the tree hole and fell fast asleep, snoring loudly.

Luo Yuan remained alert for a little longer, closing his eyes as he did not sense anything out of the ordinary. He began to gather his Will and scanned every inch of his body including the blood in his veins. This was what he did on a daily basis.

Ever since he realized that his Zhanmadao was already something akin to a magical weapon due to the influence of his Will, he had become more aggressive in his pursuits.

At times, he even felt as if his body had been imbued with magical properties just like his Zhanmadao. Even if his arm was chopped off by an enemy, it would not mean he would lose control of the arm. Just like the gods and demons in the tales of legends, he would still be able to control his dismembered arm, floating it around in the air before reconnecting it with his body again. On top of that, the arm would not even be bleeding.

However, that was just speculation and he would not want to try it out.

The night wind blew, causing the tree to sway. He suddenly felt something was wrong and quickly woke up. He looked at his body which was sitting down near the entrance of the tree hole with his leg crossed. He was shocked as he realized he fell asleep

unconsciously. He was dreaming himself looking at his own body.

He immediately felt a sense of fear, becoming highly alert. The surrounding was very quiet. He could not hear any other sound besides the trees swaying. He turned around and looked at the rest, they were still sleeping.

"Wake up! Wake up! Don't sleep anymore!"

Luo Yuan tried to wake them up gently, but none of them responded. Although his voice was very soft, they were supposed to remain slightly conscious even if they were sleeping. And now they still could not respond even when someone was trying to warn them. Apparently, they were in deep sleep.

Luo Yuan looked nervous, he quickly grabbed his Zhanmadao. He wanted to get up but he sat down again after he thought about it.

There was no sign of anything out of the ordinary. Aside from making everyone fall into a deep sleep, no other harm had come to them. Everyone was fast asleep, even the mutated beasts outside. If he simply rushed out, he was not sure if he could find the enemy, but it was a definite fact that they would be able to attack his teammates if he was out. That would be a disaster. At that moment, all he could do was to observe, just in case something happened.

He had not realized but the mist in the forest had grown thicker and thicker. It was thin as a veil when it began to appear but soon, it became so dense it seemed like the surface of a glass of milk. Due

to the density of the mist, he could barely see objects 10 meters away.

It was getting late and he was getting tired. His eyelids grew heavier as his vision blurred. Feeling as if everything around him had doubled, he could not wait to close his eyes for some well deserved sleep. Even though he could stay awake for three days and nights based on his physical condition, he felt extremely sleepy at that moment and could not resist.

Rubbing his face, he got off the ground and started pacing in the tree hole. It worked, making him more alert but he eventually started to feel sleepy again. Finally, he took out a piece of Wailing Herb in desperation and put it into his mouth, chewing it slowly. He no longer felt sleep as the pain from the Wailing Herb stung him.

...

He was awaked by the heat. It was already noon when he opened his eyes.

He spat out a bunch of herbs which he did not get to swallow before he fell asleep. He was calm and could not remember what happened last night. However, he thought he fell asleep at midnight when he lost focus on gathering his Will.

He did not expect he would sleep until noon. He felt scared by thinking about it. He felt lucky as the environment here was not what they were used to. They could have even been attacked!

He checked the time, it was about 10 am. He walked out from the cave and checked all the plants and rocks again. He frowned as he did not find anything abnormal. He felt stressed.

If they fell asleep due to environmental factors, it would be totally fine as they would have only been asleep but not in danger. However, the worst thing was that they fell asleep due to certain mutated beasts, making it a disaster.

Luo Yuan was confident with his hearing abilities. However, he had not been able to hear anything since yesterday. That would mean that there was a fearsome mutated beast living in the forest that carried out its activities within a 10 kilometer radius. Luo Yuan could not even imagine the scale of the beast's power that it could affect him from such a distance. Perhaps, he was unable to even approach it.

He could not stop himself from thinking. After giving it a thought, he woke everyone up.

Everyone woke up as fast as they could and was shocked when they saw the sky. They were panicked as they usually slept between 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and woke up at 5 a.m to 6 a.m. It has already become a habit and this was the first time they woke up so late.

"What happened last night?" Huang Jiahui asked Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan shook his head and said with a serious expression, "I

just woke up a few minutes ago. We can't stay here anymore, we need to leave as soon as possible."

Everyone was shocked as they knew Luo Yuan encountered the same thing. They knew they were in trouble. Luo Yuan walked out from the tree hole and kicked both of their pets which were still sleeping. They departed again and the giant lizard kept increasing its speed as he was urged. The atmosphere was very quiet along the journey.

"What time is it?" Cao Lin suddenly asked.

"It's 3 p.m. now!" Huang Jiahui checked the time and said.

"It means we have been running for almost five hours! What a huge forest!" Huo Dong said.

Luo Yuan frowned as he felt something was wrong but he was not sure. Time flies, the sun was going down to the west. He checked the time and it was 5 p.m.!!

"Stop!" He shouted.

The giant lizard quickly stopped as it received the order.

"What's wrong, Luo Yuan?" Zhao Yali asked nervously as she felt something was wrong.

"We are running in a circle!" Luo Yuan said. "The ground is flat and based on the speed of the giant lizard, it should be able to run 400 to 500 kilometers away. If we combine the journey yesterday, we have ran 600 to 700 kilometers. With such distance behind us, we would have crossed the Jiangnan Province already." He continued to say.

Luo Yuan then took out the bark where he drafted a map and said, "Look! It was all mountains around us and the farthest one is less than 100 kilometers from here but we haven't seen any so far. In other words, we're running in a circle!!"

## Chapter 247: Stone Heap

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"I can feel that something is wrong too. It is as though the forest is like a maze." Commander Xia said with an uncomfortable expression.

Luo Yuan quickly comforted them as he saw that everyone had started to get panicked and worried, "Luckily we realized this earlier; otherwise, we might need to stay another night here. Let me go up the tree and try to figure out where we are. We might be able to get out of the forest soon."

Luo Yuan picked the largest tree in the area and reached the top of it in just a few breaths. The tree was about 100 meters tall and he only began to feel that there was a heatwave when he was standing at the top. The heavy transpiration process of the trees caused the surroundings to look very foggy. Fortunately, Luo Yuan has excellent eyesight and the objects he was looking for were huge peaks. He looked around carefully for a few seconds and then got back onto the ground after a few leaps.

"How's the situation?" Huang Jiahui immediately asked once he landed.

"It's good, we are just about 20 km away from the nearest peak and we should be able to reach there before the sky turns dark. Let's go!" Luo Yuan said.

Everyone felt relieved when they heard his words and quickly climbed up onto the back of the giant lizard. They really did not

want to stay any longer in this scary forest. However, things were not as simple as what they imagined. After the giant lizard walked for about 10 minutes, Luo Yuan climbed up another big tree to check on their whereabouts. He realized they were not even close to the peak and the mountain now seemed to be even further away from them.

The peak from afar looked like a mirage; no matter how long they walked, they will never actually get there. This lowered their morale as they got more worried.

"What should we do? We seem to be misled by 'something'!" Zhao Yali said superstitiously.

"Even if 'something' was trying to mislead us, it doesn't mean that we won't be able to get out of here." Luo Yuan said. He then pondered for a moment and continued, "Perhaps what we see is not the reality and what we hear might be also wrong. However, I don't believe all five senses could be distorted simultaneously. I think what I see is real."

"Do you have any solution to this?" Zhao Yali quickly asked.

"I only have one silly idea, but I still need to test it out with an experiment." Luo Yuan said.

He jumped down from the giant lizard and selected two big trees as his starting and end points. He then walked ahead of the team and returned after a short while. He was smiling and said, "I walked three steps more than what I supposed to."



"Do you mean that distance in the forest is distorted?" Commander Xia asked.

"No, we would have realized it if the distance was the main problem." Luo Yuan said.

"It was the direction. There is an unknown force which has misled us! When we were walking in a straight line earlier, we were walking in circles. If we don't check where we are going from time to time, it is possible that we can be stuck here forever." Luo Yuan explained.

Luo Yuan was still puzzled by the fact that he walked three steps more than he was supposed to even though the distance between the two trees was only about 35 steps. Moreover, this was the result of him walking while looking at his destination, otherwise, no one knows how far he would have gone.

"I'll walk on top of the trees later, and you follow me with the giant lizard." Luo Yuan said. That was the only way he could think of at that moment. Everyone quickly nodded.

Then, Luo Yuan climbed up to the tree again and jumped rapidly like a monkey as the sky was getting darker. He was moving at a very high speed to avoid falling asleep unconsciously like yesterday. The giant lizard needed to "jog" to catch up with him.

Using this new strategy, the peak was finally getting nearer in their vision and the mysterious forest was far behind them after

half an hour. Everyone finally felt relieved and the strange force was finally gone.

They rested for a while and then continued their journey again soon after. They passed by a low peak and then stopped in front a stone heap when the sky was completely dark.

There were not many plants due to the absence of soil. They only saw weeds which were as tall as human beings and a few small plants. Those weeds looked yellowish and wilted under the hot sun compared to the greenery in the forest earlier. It looked like they would die anytime soon.

Due to the lack of life in the area, the level of danger was lower in this environment. They did not see any mutated beast and there were very few insects. The group finally felt calmed and relieved. They fell asleep after dinner and the campfire faded around 12 midnight. The last bit of light was finally gone after being blown out by the wind.

Suddenly, someone got up after hearing some soft noises. It was Cao Lin. She hesitated and then slowly walked towards Luo Yuan.

"Brother Luo! Brother Luo!" She called him softly.

Luo Yuan was meditating at that moment and slowly opened his eyes to look at Cao Lin.

He asked uncertainly, "What happened?"

"Can... can we talk somewhere else?" Cao Lin felt nervous as she saw Luo Yuan look at her. Her rosy face immediately became slightly pale.

Luo Yuan got up from the ground and walked a few steps further with Cao Lin. He then asked, "What's up?"

"My... my chest was stung by something just now. Could you please help me check?" Cao Lin gritted her teeth and said. She pinched the edge of her shirt while her body was trembling slightly.

She was probably nervous and scared.

"Since when was she so comfortable to allow others to see this part of her body?" Luo Yuan wondered.

"Is it serious?" He asked.

"I... I have no idea!" Cao Lin said with a shaky voice and then began to remove her shirt.

Luo Yuan wanted to stop her but he did not say anything in the end. After that, he could not help but stare at her naked body as she was not wearing anything else inside. He saw a pair of snowy 'rabbits' bouncing but there was a palm-sized purple bruise on one of them.

From Luo Yuan's initial observation, it did not look like her breast was stung by something but instead it looked like a result of pinching. Luo Yuan got the message but he did not expose the truth or reject her either as that will make her feel embarrassed. Obviously, she has put in a lot of effort and courage after hesitating for a long time.

He sighed and gently caressed the "bruise". The bruise was gone with the help of his will and her skin became snowy white again very soon. Luo Yuan continued to inspect the area for a few more seconds and then pulled back his hand and said, "Let's go back. We need to wake up early tomorrow morning."

Cao Lin's face was very hot and she quickly put on her clothes and then ran back to where she slept.

Luo Yuan sighed and returned to where he meditated earlier. He could easily do anything he wanted without paying the price as he was strong, but he could not disobey his integrity. He did not know what made him think about that phrase. He suspected that other strong people would never hold back on such an opportunity, except himself.

## Chapter 248: Jiuchuan

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"Do any of you smell anything?" Luo Yuan suddenly asked just before noon, on their second day.

"We don't think so!" The rest of them shook their heads.

Luo Yuan hesitantly took another sniff, this time the smell was more pungent. It smelt as though something had been charred with rotten eggs. The smell was vaguely familiar to him, as if he had come across it somewhere before.

He soon recalled that it was the smell of a volcano, as the odor was similar to that of a volcano eruption. Luo Yuan however, did not seem to be bothered as the risk of running into an already-erupted volcano and a volcano that was soon to erupt, were two completely different things. If the former happened, the best-case scenario was to run as far as possible. On the other hand, if the latter happened, thick smoke will be emitted continuously and perhaps even a hundred years will pass without so much as a spurt.

As they got closer to the volcano, one by one, the rest started to catch a whiff of the odor.

The group stood atop a huge rock on top of the mountain and gazed into the far distance. They were shocked to discover that there was not only one, but a chain of volcanoes along the mountain range, akin to a fire being lit one after another on the Great Wall. Their hearts quivered with fear upon catching sight of the thick, billowing smoke.

"Why are there so many volcanoes? China does not have any active volcanoes, does it?" asked Huo Dong, his face turning slightly pale.

"Maybe, but that was before!" Luo Yuan looked at the stretch of volcanoes, and took a deep breath, "The sea level had undergone dramatic changes, and the cosmic storm had affected the lava activities. This stretch of volcanoes may not erupt any time soon, but once it erupts, I am afraid that it would turn into a super volcano. Not only would this whole place be submerged under the magma, even the Reconstruction Area would also be affected."

"It wouldn't be that serious, would it?" asked a shocked Lin Xiaoji.

"I'm just making a rough prediction!" replied Luo Yuan. He had watched documentaries about the super volcanoes prior to this.

When a volcano erupts, the lava should be the least of everyone's concern. The most harmful substance will be the volcanic ashes and gas. Furthermore, with a size as big as this super volcano, each eruption can thrust about a few hundred million tons of volcanic material into the air. If that were to occur, day will become night, while summer days will turn into harsh winter nights. How about the Reconstruction Area that will potentially affect more than half of China? When the time comes, although the death of a large range of mutant beasts remain uncertain, it would definitely worsen the situation for those that were struggling to stay alive.

We must return to the Reconstruction Area as soon as possible to report this matter," The commander said immediately, after hearing what Luo Yuan had said.

Luo Yuan nodded his head. Suddenly he felt a tug in his heart, and he looked towards one of the volcanoes.

Suddenly, the tip of the volcano was spewing with lava, bursting with flames that shot about a hundred meters into the air. Initially, he thought to himself that they were only unlucky, running into an active volcano that was about to erupt. However, accompanying the spewing of lava, was a worm-like monster emerging from the volcano, with its head sticking out of the volcano pit.

"Quick, take a look, what is it?" By this time, the others had also noticed it. All of them stared in horror, without so much as a blink of an eye, at the mysterious creature that had been living in the heat of the lava.

Although it was almost six or seven kilometers away from where they stood, everyone could see it clearly due to its huge size. It looked similar to a red flatworm; the surface of its body was marked with cylindrical pattern. Below the body were two rows of dense black feet. It did not seem to have eyes, only a round opening that occupied most of its head, where flames were firing from.

At this point, the creature's head was swaying about violently, and a hundred meter-long high pressure flame was swaying in unison, shooting haphazardly in the air.

A few nearby trees that were scorched by the fire had burst into flames. Only after a few seconds being set ablaze, the trees disintegrated into a heap of black coal, evident that the temperature was extremely high.

The fire continued to blaze. In another vent, as if receiving a certain signal, a second worm came crawling out, followed by a third, and a fourth. Luo Yuan was horrified to discover that almost all the volcanoes had been inhabited by the mysterious creatures.

The subsequent events had the whole area turning into a worm fiesta. Innumerable streams of fire were shooting back and forth in mid-air. The extremely high temperature had caused distortions in the air and even from where Luo Yuan stood, the temperature had increased by several degrees. The smell of something burning started permeating the air.

The congregation lasted for a full half an hour before it finally stopped. One by one, the worms burrowed back into the volcanic vents.

Everyone turned slightly pale after witnessing the incident, and did not come to their senses until a few seconds later. They did not dare to linger around the area any longer. After waiting for the worms to disappear, they tried to distance themselves from the volcanoes, and continued to move forward.

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As they adjourned, although the terrains were uneven and surrounded by endless mountains, they could feel the altitude decreasing. The gradual disappearance of the snow-capped mountains nearby, and the peak of the mountains becoming lower were imminent of nothing but good news to them.

On the fifth day of their journey, they even found some traces of human beings.

There was a rundown deserted village nearby, with several stone pillars lying on the ground. Overgrown weeds, broken pieces of bricks and rotting furniture could be found everywhere. Huang Jiahui even found a ceramic bowl – fully intact – belonging to the Mao dynasty, among the ruins.

This proved that the village was not isolated from the outside world, and perhaps after a period of time, they too will be able to escape this mountainous zone

This filled their heart with excitement, yet at the same time, harboured mixed feelings. They had encountered various difficulties and obstacles throughout their whole journey. They were agitated and filled with an unimaginable amount of pressure.

The path towards the village was camouflaged by plants and was well-hidden, but after looking carefully at the tracks to compare the compactness of the ground and the similarity of the gravel, a single path could be identified.

The giant lizard walked forward, according to the direction of the

small path. Along the trail, the ruins of the village could be seen everywhere. By the evening, they stumbled upon a cement road in front of them.

The cement road was badly damaged. Its surface was laden with potholes and was covered with moss and weed, almost blending into the jungles on both sides of the road.

As they walked onto the cement road, traces of human dwellings were increasingly obvious and the dense canopy of trees gradually became thinner.

A lot of collapsed buildings were found, and brightly coloured trash were strewn everywhere. The air was also reeking of decay and mildew. Despite all that, it was puzzling as to why everyone was still excited when they saw the site.

"Where is this place?" asked Huang Jiahui, trying hard to suppress her mixed emotions.

"I guess this used to be a town here. Very soon, we will arrive the city, and there must be a well-preserved map," said Commander Xia, in a high-pitched voice.

As darkness descended, the group simply discussed among themselves, and decided that they will not stay the night, and would instead hurry onto the nearest city.

Because the highway was a relatively flat terrain, the giant lizard

could finally unleash its lightning speed. It strode with heavy footsteps, and under Luo Yuan's spurring, the giant lizard began to pick up its speed, easily approaching eighty to ninety yards. As the wind blew strongly against them, everyone tightened their clutch onto the rattan cover on its back, to avoid being flung off by the force.

Their location was situated at juncture of Qinghai and Tibet, where it was sparsely populated. Apart from a single highway, it was almost impossible to find a village. A few car tires were found shrivelled up and scattered across the road. As for the car, it had long been corroded into a mound of red rust.

The whole ride was quiet and lonely, except for the heavy footsteps of the giant lizard and the king kong, which echoed into the night sky.

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At nine o'clock in the evening, they finally arrived at the city within the forest.

The city seemed ancient, possibly dating back to at least a thousand years ago. The atmosphere was filled with aging time and tide, as well years of decadence. The original architecture had long since faded away, and even the colour of the reinforced concrete was blanketed by a deep shade of green.

But the squad were already used to this scene, and were unfazed by this.

Although most of the buildings were decayed and had now collapsed, there were still some buildings standing erected with the support of some vines. They were almost blending into the woods nearby.

"Let's go to the tallest building there to have a look," said Luo Yuan.

The building that was five to six storeys high had its surface camouflaged with thick green vines. This building was the only tallest, well-preserved building nearby. Luo Yuan dismounted from the giant lizard, and hacked all the plants surrounding the building with his Zhanmadao, quickly exposing the heavily-corroded concrete wall.

He extended his leg to give it a kick. A clatter sound was heard, and a big hole suddenly appeared on the wall.

Although his kick wasn't a weak one, a normal wall would not have given way so easily. But as this concrete wall had been corroded by plants, its sturdiness had long been lost. It seemed to have been hollowed out now, as even a gentle kick had easily knocked it down.

Luo Yuan let the giant lizard and king kong back away a little, before immediately drilling into the hole. He first cleared a few mutated beasts' nests away before the rest of the group followed along in a single file.

Inside, it was pitch black and humid, and emitted a pungent, rotten stench.

"Boss Luo, did you find anything?" Huo Dong asked, as he walked over.

"No, it's too wet here, even the office desks had decayed, let alone a paper map. I will go upstairs to have a look, feel free to take your leave first," Luo Yuan said. The building here was very fragile, like a meek pulp of tofu. With a little push, the building would possibly have collapsed. Given the circumstances, except perhaps for Luo Yuan, nobody was completely safe.

"Be careful!" said Huang Jiahui.

Luo Yuan nodded his head, and walked quickly towards the stairs. The stairs had been thoroughly broken, and he had no choice but to leap towards the second floor. The strong impact of his jump as he landed caused a large piece of flooring to collapse. Thankfully, he had left that precarious spot and with some stealthy moves, he managed to enter one of the rooms.

It seemed that this building was an office building. Luo Yuan saw a lot of computer remains, as well as some disintegrated paper documents.

Luo Yuan carefully went through each of the documents, in attempt to find any form of useful information. Unfortunately, all the handwriting had now become indiscernible, as the paper had already decayed into a powdery, damp substance.

"Huh?" He noticed a safe deposit box propped by the corner.

It was covered in rust, but there were no damages. His face gleamed with joy, as he brandished his Zhanmadao, and gently cut it open. Inside, laid a thick stack of documents and invoices.

These documents were well-preserved, except for a few that had been affected by the moisture. Sadly, there were no maps. But come to think of it, it was pointless to lock up a map inside a safe deposit box anyway.

He picked up one of the documents; it appeared to be a commercial contract. Luo Yuan did not take a close look, but flipped to the underside to look at promisor and the promisee of the contract.

Promisor: Jiu Chuan Yongle Advertising Co., Ltd.

Promisee: Jiuchuan Shengde Tourism Real Estate Co., Ltd

He also looked through the rest of the documents, and found that most of the addresses had stated 'Jiuchuan'. It looked like in all probability, this city could be called Jiuchuan after all. The only problem now, was that he had absolutely no recollection nor even a slight inkling of its name.

## Chapter 249: Highway

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Luo Yuan searched through all the rooms on the second floor, but his efforts were in vain.

At that very moment, Luo Yuan heard a commotion. It seemed like something had happened outside. His expression changed slightly before picking up his Zhanmadao. He then took a few strides ahead and jumped onto the first floor. In an instant, he emerged from a small hole.

Sprawling all over the ground were six mutated insects, each measuring about a meter long. Upon closer observation, the ferocious-looking mutated insects seemed to have been already mutilated; the floor was drenched with their colourful fluid. Looking at the wounds on their body, aside from the two that was killed by Wang Shishi, the remaining four had been slashed by swords.

Everyone's Strength had greatly improved from what it once was. Low level mutated beasts such as these were no longer a threat to them.

"Have you found the map yet?" asked Huang Jiahui, after noticing Luo Yuan walking over.

"No, the deterioration in this place is far too severe, and I reckon it will be the same for the other places, unless someone had deliberately preserved one," answered Luo Yuan helplessly.

There was a very slim chance of this happening. Before the apocalypse, maps were not particularly important, and especially with the advent of smartphones, people had rarely used actual maps.

"But at least we are certain of the name of this location. Have any of you heard of Jiuchuan City?" asked Luo Yuan.

Everyone looked at each other with clueless faces. Most of them were from the South. As far as their knowledge goes about the cities in the West, apart from a few famous tourist attractions and the provincial capital, they were unfamiliar with the rest of the small cities. Jiuchuan was clearly one of the latter and most of them had not even heard of this place.

"I think I might have heard of it somewhere!" said Huo Dong suddenly, but he looked somewhat unsure, as he could not confirm where he had heard it from.

"Do not rush and think carefully..." said Luo Yuan quickly.

Huo Dong paced up and down and furrowed his brows, "I got it! I used to have a customer previously, and it seems like he was from around here."

"Are there any others?" Luo Yuan asked, his face laced with some disappointment. They could not deduce anything with such little information.



"It was a long time ago. Moreover, that was a small-time customer and I rarely paid any attention to him. Oh yes, there could be a highway nearby. I remembered that I had checked it out before," Huo Dong scratched his head, all the thinking had racked his brains till his head hurt.

Everyone's eyes lit up.

"If you are sure that there are highways here, then everything would be much easier. There were very few highways in the West. According to our geographical location, if I have guessed it correctly, the highway will be the Gong Yu highway," Commander Xia said, "Gong Yu highway is not far from Taklamakan and there is a national line road that will lead to that place. If we are fast enough, and if everything goes as planned, we can arrive at the Reconstruction Area in one or two days."

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At this time point, it was already close to nine o'clock in the evening. The group had found a relatively safe and sound basement, and was ready to put up for the night.

The ground was covered with damp and warm slippery moss. They lined the ground with the pelt of the mutated beasts and took a seat on the floor. Dried meat was distributed and they started to chomp onto the food.

It was not suitable for them to set up a camp fire due to the lack of space. Thankfully, there were some leftover dried meat.

Everyone slowly chewed onto the rubber-like meat, while chatting about. Gradually, the topic steered towards the Reconstruction Area.

"Commander Xia, why don't you give us a tip or two, on what we should be aware of in the Reconstruction Area?" Huang Jiahui asked.

Commander Xia paused for a moment, and after gulping the food down his throat, he said, "There is nothing particular to take note of. The laws are basically the same as before, but it may be stricter now. Of course, there will be some changes, such as job distribution and obligatory services, especially the military service, which is mandatory. Once the recruitment notice is issued, it must be served, or one would be punished as treacherous renegades. Even if it is not for the military service, everyone must undergo military training for a certain period of time, to prepare for the next enlistment."

"Even the women?" Cao Lin asked breathlessly. She was just surprised, despite being able to handle the training without a doubt. After all, she had gone through so many life and death situations and had managed to survive up to this stage, so much so that she was no longer the damsel in distress like she used to be, before the start of apocalypse.

"Both men and women are the same. When facing a mutated beast, we cannot take care of women," Commander Xia said, in a serious tone.

They had turned everyone into soldiers. Luo Yuan thought with a heavy heart.

"You might be familiar with the food rationing system. Money is rarely used now. As for the survivors, after you arrive, you will receive a certain amount of food and water every month until you are assigned to a task. Of course, you will only receive coupons of various types.

However, all of you will have more choices, whether to work or to become a soldier stationed at the border of small town. The living condition there is definitely better than that of the workers'," said Commander Xia after some thought.

"At the border of the town?" Luo Yuan asked.

"The Reconstruction Area is just an ambiguous name. After all, it accommodates more than 100 million people, and it is hardly just a city. In fact, it comprises many cities. There are central areas, and also borderline areas. We divided the cities into three rings of which the outer ring made up the border region, as well as the last line of defence for humankind. Although the risk was not as high as the front line, there have been attacks before, from time to time. Thus, it is much more dangerous for the civilians," said Commander Xia.

No one batted an eyelid and their expression remained the same. After they had survived the virgin forest, they thought nothing of such a small threat.

"You mentioned about work distribution. I don't think there are any business companies around here anymore, is there?" Huo Dong curiously asked. He went into the field of business after he had dropped out of junior high school. Apart from doing business, he did not know what else he would do.

"That is not the case, it is only very low in numbers. Most people will be assigned to work at various factories, according to their individual skills. If they are not capable, of course you are free to set up a business of your own. However, the Reconstruction Area is now in a state of warfare, and not much manpower or resources are to be wasted. So, do not even think of hiring or obtaining new supplies of raw material," Commander Xia explained. As such, it had definitely obliterated the private business industry.

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Everyone continued to have small talks in between. Time had flown by and before they knew it, it was soon dawn.

Even though none of them had slept the night before, they did not feel the least bit tired. As soon as daylight broke, the team had set out on their way again.

After looking for nearly an hour, they finally found the entrance to the highway.

Before the apocalypse, the roads were flanked with the Gobi Desert. Luo Yuan was pleasantly surprised to find that this highway was preserved quite well. The deterioration of the asphalt

pavement was not that serious, and the plants were very sparsely distributed. When the strong winds blew, there was still some fine sand in the air. Although the sand was too fine to touch, it still made them happy, as it indicated that the desert was not entirely invaded by the floras.

But their joy was obviously short-lived, as the Western areas had proven how unpredictable the climate could be.

After four hours, they managed to quickly cross the Gobi Desert, and entered back onto the mountainous terrains. Their path had become an on-and-off beaten track once again.

Large parts of the road had already collapsed and it was buried beneath the fallen mountain rocks. Of course, this was not much of a hindrance to them as compared to the collapsed bridge that connected the two mountain peaks. Their only choice was to retreat and enter the jungle for a detour.

# Chapter 250: Deserter

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After two days, they finally arrived at another city but similar to the rest, it was also a city in ruins.

However, lady luck was on their side this time. At one of the ruins that they presumed was an old train station, they found a worn-out local map. Most parts of the map were already torn, but key information such as specific directions, city names and prefectural roads were still legible.

This important piece of information provided them with help, just in the nick of time. At least, they no longer had to rush about haphazardly without so much as an inkling of a guide.

As the city was in ruins and appeared to be totally different from its original state, the group had almost searched the whole city before they could find the location of prefectural road. The road was almost diffused into the surrounding greens and was covered by a layer of thick vines, which would have gone unnoticed should they not have used the map.

The vines looked very bizarre as they did not have any leaves, only some intertwined rough and flat stems that formed a massive carpet. The heavy steps of the giant lizard and king kong on the ground broke the vines apart, producing cracking sounds that scared off many small-sized mutated beasts.

As the group traveled out of the city, plants similar to cacti gradually appeared in their line of vision. However, when

compared to normal cacti, these plants were surprisingly enormous. They were about a hundred to two hundred meters high; much higher than most trees were, making them stand out from the rest. They resembled green skyscrapers from a distance.

"These are super cacti, edible and thus one of the main vegetables in the Reconstruction Area. We are currently not far away from the desert." Commander Xia said excitedly when he caught sight of these plants.

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After traveling for about two hours and crossing a few junctions, the environment and their surroundings started to change rather distinctively. The plants became sparser and shorter, and the soil, which was mixed with yellowish-white sands, was exposed to the air for the first time.

They had already arrived the desert, or rather, the desert prior to the apocalypse. But alas, it was engulfed by the plants now, only less sparse.

The windbreak forest at the both sides of the road seemed to have been chopped down a couple of times, as the recently grown plants were much shorter than those plants that were located further away. As they traveled on, the abandoned cars had increased and almost blocked the whole road eventually, akin to a long dragon that stretched away into the infinite distance.

Smaller cars were not seen anywhere around, as most were

reconfigured passenger cars and trucks, while some were armored vehicles and tanks.

White bones were seen everywhere, some were the mutated beasts', while the others belonged to humans. If observed carefully, the road surface appeared to be light brown, which was what they made out to be dried blood.

Some jewelry, gold bars and debris of antiques were strewn all over the road as if they didn't cost a thing, all mixed up with the remnants and bones. As for those paper bank notes, they had already been decayed.

It was unimaginable how the migration had cost that many lives, and corpses were sprawled all over the entire road.

Seeing such a scene, the group was overcome by a wave of sadness, and could not help but to reminisce the hardships in the past.

Nevertheless, such a gory scene depicted that the Reconstruction Area was not far away!

Luo Yuan seemed to have picked up some voices not too far away. He looked towards the source of the voice and was stunned, "Eh, there's someone here!"

"What? Where?" Huang Jiahui asked with a surprise face.



They were after all, in the wilderness. Along the way, other than themselves, they could see no one. If they were not aware that there was a place known as the Reconstruction Area, they would have thought that human beings had already gone extinct.

Luo Yuan pointed at their direction, and the group looked towards them. In the forest afar, a group of people were squatting on the floor while keeping vigil. They were a group of six; dirty and unkempt, with torn to rags clothes. Unlike average refugees, they did not appear to be miserable but looked wild and untamed instead.

"They're the wanderers!" Commander Xia suddenly said.

"Wanderers?" Luo Yuan asked doubtfully.

"This is a group formed by the deserters, criminals, and some untamed evolved people!" The tone of Commander Xia sounded contemptuous and laced with disdain, "In the group, most of them are the deserters. As the pressure from the battlefield was too high, with many of them losing their lives daily, they could not adapt to such a lifestyle, and soon became deserters. They are now no longer able to enter the Reconstruction Area, and have no choice but to be left wandering nearby."

"They were just left like this? Did the Reconstruction Area not encircle and suppress them?" As Huang Jiahui used to be a cop, she asked while casting a despicable glance at them.

"The number of wanderers were too large, with about hundreds

of thousands of them, and they were very much dispersed. Those who were weak and afraid of dying on the battlefield, after becoming wanderers, have also become especially ferocious and wild. Amongst them were the strong, evolved people and this makes things very tricky. We tried to carry out large extent encirclement and suppression for a few times but it was proven futile. Therefore, nobody enforces this anymore, as their existence has actually reduced the stress that we're having at the defense line. So, we have decided to let them be, on one condition – that they don't form large dangerous groups or cause any ruckus."

Luo Yuan nodded in his heart. The largest enemy of humankind was still the mutated beasts. Therefore, men did not have much energy to waste on internal conflicts such as these.

"All of you stay here. I'm going over to ask a few questions," Luo Yuan said, after a thought.

"Be careful, they may have guns," Huang Jiahui warned.

The fire arms did not pose as much of a threat to him anymore unless he was attacked with high-density bullets. Otherwise, with his Agility, no one was able to hit him. Despite that, Luo Yuan still nodded and leapt off the giant lizard. Each step he took was about seven to eight meters far. Though he walked step by step, his Speed was extremely fast.

As the group saw it, they were shocked and subconsciously retreated by a few steps. Two of them even took out their rifle, as if they were ready to fire away. Nevertheless, they were stopped by a middle-aged man, "Don't act recklessly and keep your rifle. Let's

see what he is trying to do."

After a few breaths, the silhouette suddenly appeared in front of them. The people were breathing fast and suddenly, the oppressive aura filled the atmosphere, and even the air particles seemed to begin vibrating.

Their face turned pale, feeling a slight difficulty in breathing. The middle-aged leader tried to stay calm and asked, "My friend, how can my brothers and I help you?"

Luo Yuan was a bit shocked as he had not thought that the group had relatively good Will. Even Huo Dong and the others were not any better when he exerted thirty percent of his Aura. In fact, they were able to endure this only because they were close to him.

Realizing that he had intimidated them, Luo Yuan no longer wanted to act menacingly. Therefore, he kept his Aura and said, "Nothing much, I just want to know how far the Reconstruction Area is from here... it would be better if you have a map."

The middle-aged leader instantly heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed that the supposedly terrifying person he was facing, turned out to be an approachable person after all. However, when he recovered, he said with a surprise, "Do all of you want to go to the Reconstruction Area? From the outside?"

"Huh? Are there no other survivors coming here anymore?" Luo Yuan was sharp enough to read his facial expression.

"I'm not sure about other places, but this area no longer has survivors coming in within the last three months. The same could be said for other places too," the middle-aged leader said.

"Nobody anymore?" Luo Yuan sobbed in his heart and was speechless for a while.

The middle-aged leader tried to observe his body language, and with caution, he said, "Are you trying to sneak in or go directly to the garrison?"

"Sneak in?" Luo Yuan recovered, "Other than sneaking in, can't we enter the Reconstruction Area just like that?"

"No. This is because there is a huge defense area with soldiers everywhere. You have to cross through the defense line if you want to enter the Reconstruction Area. If you manage to slip across, I know a location of an underground path!" The middle-aged leader said, "Maybe you aren't aware of this, but the rules of the Reconstruction Area is strict, among them includes the compulsory military service which may cost you your life. As you won't need to register yourself if you choose to sneak in, you can avoid this perfectly."

Luo Yuan glanced at him and had already understood his motives. He wanted to try to manipulate their Strength to sneak in and return to the Reconstruction Area. He also understood that the underground path should not be an easy route to take on. Nevertheless, they will surely be disappointed.

"We shall go to the garrison directly. Do you have a map?" Luo Yuan said.

The middle-aged leader was stunned, and although impressed, a sliver of disappointment flashed through his heart. As he did not dare to show any form of weakness, he replied immediately, "How could we possibly own a map? Just go along this road for about two to three hours and you will arrive at the defense region."

Luo Yuan left quickly.

While looking at the group riding on the enormous beast leaving so quickly, the middle-aged leader was relieved and was filled with admiration yet felt a slight regret simultaneously. He was emotionally disturbed.

Perhaps it would have been better if he did not become a deserter after all.

"Regiment Commander, let's return!"

## Chapter 251: Worm

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Along the way, they caught a glimpse of some wanderers, but none of them dared to approach the group. As most of them saw the silhouette of the giant lizard, it was enough to send them fleeing, without even looking at its passengers. Only a handful of them who did not run away, were only looking from afar vigilantly.

Judging from their clothes, the lives of the wanderers did not look good at all.

A few wanderers at the front had probably just been exiled from the Construction Area not too long ago, as they still had their shirts on. Nevertheless, most of them were only wearing rough beast skin on their backs, while some were even naked, akin to a group of barbarians. What surprised Luo Yuan was that the few women he saw were neither embarrassed nor uncomfortable, as they naturally went about with their lives without even covering their private parts. It was as though they had not worn a single piece of clothing in their lives before.

The sense of civilization had gradually faded from them. Each of their actions was savage, and Luo Yuan could only see ferocious and barbaric demeanors plastered across their faces.

Luo Yuan could not help to sigh. He then suddenly had thought, if the Construction Area falls, it could very well be the end of humankind. If such a meagre ethnic group were not able to uphold the foundation of civilization, the inheritance of knowledge will gradually be forgotten, and their grandchildren will only be left to

rely on their imagination of the splendid civilization that their forefathers built.

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Wang Shishi was thrilled. Along the way, she continuously used her Telekinesis to pick up the jewelries and gold from the floor. The other women were also helping her to search carefully with interest, and they screamed loudly as and when they discovered treasure.

All of them were in a deliriously jolly mood, it could either be due to the temptation of the jewelries, or how relieved they were, knowing that they were about to be safe and sound entering the human base camp,

Those dusty and blood-stained jewelries shone with an enchanting gloss that attracted more attention after they were wiped clean. Even Luo Yuan could not help himself from stealing a few glances at them.

For thousands of years, these things could become assets or its equivalent, which was reasonable, because they had the power to induce the deepest desires of human beings.

Wang Shishi did not take all these jewelries to herself but distributed a portion of it to everyone. Of course, the best, which included a natural diamond the size of a thumb, was gifted to Luo Yuan. He smiled but did not decline, as he got to know from Commander Xia that even though the Construction Area had been

replaced with planned economy, jewelry – especially gold – were still valuable. It was actually held in high regard, provided that many still recognize its worth. It would still be valuable even if the government had imposed a ban.

The portions of both Wang Shishi and Luo Yuan's were kept together in a baggage by Huang Jiahui, but the rest kept their own portion. Though they did not express much, each of them gradually formed their own thoughts as they got closer to the Construction Area.

However, everyone of them was in an elevated mood. They were talking and laughing joyfully along the way. Even the king kong was affected as it kept roaring with delight. With its physically strong body, it had even lifted a few rusty cars and threw them around; followed by loud banging.

Its body of about seven to eight meters tall was filled with explosive strength. It could even flip those heavy trailers. As for those small sized cars it chanced upon occasionally, it was able to lift them up high and fling them to about a hundred meters away, causing Luo Yuan to give it a sidelong glance.

As they got nearer to the Construction Area, traces of civilization were increasing. Luo Yuan had also seen the fighter plane in the sky several times now. Perhaps they were unmanned, and they were flying at an altitude of more than ten thousand meters. A normal person might not be able to distinguish the tiny speck, but his eyesight was good enough to discern its shape and color clearly.

After travelling for about a hundred kilometers, the road



conditions got better as the moss and rattan had almost disappeared, apart from the signs of recent patches. Those abandoned cars on the road were also greatly reduced, and new skid marks of tires proved that they were already extremely close to the Construction Area.

“Look, are those artillery craters?” Lin Xiaoji suddenly asked.

Luo Yuan looked at the direction he pointed at. About a kilometer away, there was an area of about a few kilometers square without any plants in sight. Many holes of various sizes were seen puncturing the surface of the ground, akin to the surface of the moon. Of course, the area was not completely barren without any plants, but they appeared to be shorter and sparser as if they had just begun to sprout.

The bombardments of artillery at the desert could be easily disregarded, as the artillery craters could be camouflaged quickly by speedily growing plants or strong wind. If those artillery craters can be seen easily by the naked eye, it could only mean one thing. After Commander Xia looked at them for a while, he said in all seriousness, “This area should be bombarded only recently, I reckon it had happened not more than half a month ago.”

“It just happened not too long ago?” Lin Xiaoji asked, surprised.

The group was shocked and no longer felt relaxed as it meant that there had been battles occurring only just recently. Therefore, danger might still be lurking behind every rock, as some might have narrowly escaped the net.

Luo Yuan furtively held onto the handle of his Zhanmadao tightly. Sniffing attentively, he was able to pick up a faint smell of artillery smoke.

He carefully paid attention to his surroundings. It was very quiet, possibly because of the barren desert with only very sparse plants. Even though there were many mutated beasts, most of them were weak and small. Hence, along the way, he could barely see the dark blue rank mutated beasts, let alone those that were of the light green rank.

This was after all, a location near the Construction Area, the base camp of human beings, which should have been patrolled and cleansed several times now. It had seemed that the Construction Area appeared to be safer than expected, but he clearly understood now that it was a mere façade. What threatened the humans the most was in fact, not the powerful mutated beasts, as they were small in number, and man had enough powerful weapons to fight against these larger individuals. But it was those unremarkable creatures that held the power to threaten the survival of mankind.

He could still vividly remember the upheaval that occurred at Hedong City. A scourge of mutated mosquitoes with rather weak capabilities actually turned the whole city into a haunted one, causing everyone to cower with panic and fear. This eventually ruined the city, largely due to negligence in the defense army.

He found that some burrows could be seen clearly in the desert. The size of these burrows varied, with the small one about a foot, and the big one reaching about few meters. Although these

burrows were found at the loose sand of the desert, they did not seem to collapse, as if they were held together by something.

He frowned slightly, as it seemed to have many underground creatures buried underneath.

The giant lizard became rather impatient and shot out thick smoke from its nostrils, which were occasionally mixed with fiery sparks. The king kong too, often exposed its ferocious teeth and growled.

With such an abnormal situation, the group realized that danger was just around the corner.

“Luo Yuan!” Seeing that Luo Yuan was sitting there, not moving, Zhao Yali could not help but to remind him.

“Don’t be nervous, it’s just a few little worms!” comforted Luo Yuan.

He was not showing any signs of nervousness. With his extraordinary strength, apart from a few super lifeforms, the common mutated beasts could barely threaten him.

As the strength of Luo Yuan had been deeply rooted in the heart of the group, they were relieved when they heard his response.

Luo Yuan was sitting on the back of the giant lizard while monitoring his surroundings attentively. The sounds transmitted

underground seemed to be subtle yet rustling loudly, similar to the sound of two pieces of sandpaper scraping against each other.

There seemed to be more than one spot!

Luo Yuan's ears twitched; he drew out a short spear from his backpack and stood up. Meanwhile, the giant lizard had stopped moving forward but was stomping on the spot irritably.

“It's coming, hold tight!” Luo Yuan grunted.

The group was shocked and held tightly onto the rattan carpet on the back of the giant lizard while trying to lower their bodies as flatly as they could.

Just as he finished his sentence, the concrete beneath the legs of the giant lizard suddenly gave way, and gravel began bursting out. Meanwhile, a giant mouth was biting onto the stomach area of giant lizard. The belly was the softest and most vulnerable part of these creatures. Once bitten, it could also signify the end of its life.

The brilliant angle of its attack was far from expected. Even Luo Yuan had never thought that these worm-like creatures underground would have such an accurate sense of direction. His line of vision was completely blocked, and thus unable to take action.

Nevertheless, the giant lizard exerted its 15 point Agility during the critical moment. It retreated a few steps back and opened its

mouth to unleash a burst of flames in a state of fear and fury.

Bang! A loud sound ensued.

The head of the worm-like creature was bludgeoned onto the floor by the high-pressured flames, with its body still in flames. The pain caused by the burns had caused it to struggle frantically. But alas, the menacing flames could not be extinguished at all. It kept struggling in vain, and roads were destroyed, as collateral damage due to its gigantic body size.

Soon, the area where the giant worm was, had caved into a deep pit of more than 10 meters in circumference. A large amount of burning gravel were spattering towards all directions like rapid bullets, but fortunately, Wang Shishi had already used her Will to repel its force.

The giant worm was not alone. Shortly after, another worm appeared but it was targeting the king kong instead.

The king kong, although not too quick in response, it was much smarter. After seeing the giant lizard getting attacked, the former had already jumped onto an abandoned truck nearby.

When the giant worm appeared, the whole truck was flipped over and the king kong was hurled into the air. Though it was a meagre attempt, this saved its life.

Just as the giant worm attempted to chomp onto its bait in the

air, a short spear whizzed past and struck its large mouth. Instantly, its upper jaw burst and half of its head blew off.

Luo Yuan commanded the giant lizard to move backwards, leapt down and sprinted on the ground. After a few breaths, he abruptly stopped. While sensing the hive of activity underground, which seemed to have numerous giant worms rushing to the scene, he smirked and took a deep breath. Then, he lifted up his leg, which shook the ground as if the whole earth had been lifted up, and numerous cracks appeared on the road. Luo Yan then stomped heavily onto the ground.

With a loud boom, like explosive dynamites buried underground, the cracking road had suddenly exploded into debris. Luo Yuan did not stop there but he lifted his leg again and stomped heavily with all his mighty strength.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

After stomping for four consecutive times, clouds of dust suddenly filled the air within a circumference of a hundred meters. The air flow and immense power could even be felt clearly by Huang Jiahui and the group, who stood more than a hundred meters away. It was as though an earthquake, albeit small in magnitude, had just occurred.

As the dust gradually dispersed, the five bodies of the giant worm that had wriggled themselves out were now lying on the ground. Some of the bodies were flattened by the immense force, while the rest had been ripped apart. They were now lying in a pool of their own bodily fluids.

Their strong will to live had them twitching at the brink of death, but that was their final struggle before breathing their last.

If they were to be on ground level, the power of the Earth Stomp would not have been as strong, as it was only capable of making these dark blue level creatures, and the two light green level creatures feel dizzy. But underground? It was different story altogether.

The Earth Stomp that changed the topography underground had caused these giant worms to endure an unimaginable and terrifying force that squashed them whole; it was even fatal for light green level creatures.

Luo Yuan prostrated himself on the ground to listen intently. The situation underground was already quiet, as the rest of the giant worms who was unaffected would have had already escaped.

He retreated from the impulse of the earth, flicked the dust off his body, and went back onto the giant lizard to adjourn.

The battle that lasted for less than 20 seconds had now come to an end. Seven large corpses were left to die on the spot, still slightly twitching. At the same time, an unmanned aerial vehicle hovering above happened to capture the footage of the scene, which was instantly sent to the Central Safety and Strategy Information Management Center, located at the New Capital City of Reconstruction Area.

# Chapter 252: Arrival

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"It's the first line of defense at the front, and it's the most important one," Commander Xia said, with a tinge of emotion.

It was a gray fort, and its large size can be seen even from afar. It was very different from the fort used during the World War II; it was a hemispheric giant battle beast, fully armed.

Various types of weapons with different calibers had filled every single inch of this hemispheric fort. Some magnificently large cannons could be spotted within its grounds too. The dark hole was so huge that it could fit even more than one person of average adult-size. It certainly looked formidable.

When one looked over, either horizontally or vertically, one by one, the number of forts were so great that one was able to see them all, stretching until the end of one's line of vision – it was definitely shocking!

As they got closer to those forts, Luo Yuan could not hold back his emotions.

No words could describe how he felt, as the feeling brimming within him was complicated and rather complex. He harbored uncontrollable excitement; a feeling of returning home that made him so eager to check it out, yet overwhelmed by a faint fear, as he had been away for too long, which had now alienated him from the human society. As he had been living a life without any restrictions for the longest time, he was worried as to whether or



not he was able to readapt to society, with its ever-binding social norms. However, these faint emotions were not strong enough to overpower him from wanting to get inside.

There were thousands of such forts and two-thirds of them were situated at the outer rim. Its walls were about three meters thick, and served as a barricade to almost any kind of attack. The ground had a layer of iron flooring about half meter thick on top of the cement. Apart from the operating personnel, each fort had a battalion of artillery troops as a reserve force.

Then, about ten kilometers away, a fort suddenly fired and a long streak of flames was seen shooting towards the sky, as if the heavens had punished a hovering mutated beast, leaving it in agony to struggle and fall to its death.

"Can the threat of the beasts break through the defense?" Luo Yuan withdrew his gaze, as he turned his head to ask.

Commander Xia paused for a moment before he replied, "Basically, it can defend any threat by beasts below the level of five."

He then continued to explain, even when Luo Yuan had not probed further. "It's a rating system of the Construction Area to divide the degree of danger indefinitely. The scale of level one was lesser than ten thousand, while the scale of level five was about one million to five million. However, this rating system was not very accurate because the density, impact, size and strength of each individual did play a pivotal role too. The most dreadful problem in the Construction Area was neither the mutated beasts

nor the mutated birds, but the threat of the insects. Their large number and smaller body size had made it difficult for defense.

Previously, we had one insect threat in our Construction Area. We suffered a great loss as it ruined a few cities at the outer rim."

...

"That's large!"

It looked like nothing from afar, but as it got nearer, it was not only huge and heavy but also boasted a height that was greater than ten floors. In addition, it had an area of more than ten thousand, almost the size of a giant beast lying horizontally on the desert. Furthermore, its body was full of weapons and it exerted an oppressing aura, which made the group grow anxious.

Even Luo Yuan felt uncomfortable and insecure with those cannons.

All of a sudden, the giant iron door of the fort was flung open, and a completely enclosed jeep drove over at high speed.

Luo Yuan stopped both the giant lizard and the king kong, dismounted from the former, and waited for the jeep to come closer.

When the door of the jeep was opened, two tanned soldiers quickly got out and trotted over. "This is defense line no. 151

military fort. Are all of you survivors?" One of the officers with a lieutenant military rank shouted to ask, while glancing at the giant beast uncontrollably.

"Hello lieutenant, four of us are the soldiers from the 19th army, 15th force. Because of the plane accident, we had lost contact. I'm Xia Qiang, the company commander of the third corps, fifth company. These are the survivors." Commander Xia saluted with excited expression along with other three soldiers.

The lieutenant returned the salutation with a surprise: "Oh, four of you are the comrades whom we have lost contact with? You are so lucky to have survived, but the 19th army is not anywhere around here. I heard that they have been positioned at a new oil field, I'm not certain with the details though. You may need to report at the Department of Military Affairs at the Construction Area."

Commander Xia nodded as he had obviously mentally prepared for this.

Then, the lieutenant looked at Luo Yuan and his group with curiosity. He had met many survivors before. Some were in shabby wear, fixed eyes, excited and crying in distress, while some were a bit of a rebel and fierce, but none was as special as this group of people.

Their shirts were surprisingly clean and neat, as if they were new; their fingernails did not have any dirt in them, depicting that they were cleaned often; their complexion was fair and face ruddy, obviously they were not malnourished. Other than exuding a state

of excitement and joy, their calmness made them look more like they were in an era of peace, instead of survivors of an apocalypse.

However, what made him more curious was the sudden order he received from his superiors before he came out, which was to welcome the group of evolved people riding on a mutated beast, with special treatment.

He had not seen the footage of the battle between Luo Yuan and the desert's crypt worm, thus he did not know the evolved ability that Luo Yuan shown was so important to the Construction Area. After all, the underground mutated beasts had always been tricky, as they usually hide deeply underground where there was no effective detection method up-to-date.

What was more serious was that there were many such underground creatures in the desert region and the Construction Area almost had to deal with hundreds of attacks daily, which took away the life of thousands. On top of that, they were becoming more cunning as they moved very swiftly. After they attacked once, they will flee deep into the ground and almost could not be killed. As such, it was definitely a nightmare to humankind.

...

The outer appearance of the fort looked menacing, akin to those in a science-fiction horror story, but its interior was rough yet spacious.

It comprised a bumpy cemented surface, coarse walls without a

coat of painting and large words of slogans to motivate and inspire guests. What really caught their eye were the rows of large rocket vehicles at both sides. If a few kids were to walk along the road, their height was incomparable to that of its tire.

The group followed a few soldiers into the fort where they were simply asked a few questions and had their pictures taken. Huo Dong was held on to the box of canned food given by the lieutenant just as when they were given a pass, with a stamp hanging around their necks. These somehow made Luo Yuan feel a sense of warmth.

What differed this from the olden days was that these passes were not plastic ones, but instead merely a piece of wood strung by a thin hemp rope. After the apocalypse, the resources were apparently insufficient, hence materials such as plastic could not be wasted on items like these.

There were many forts around this region, where the group had to stop frequently after a certain distance for security checks. Fortunately, it did not take much time as they were let through quickly after their passes had been inspected. After they passed through thirteen forts, the endless checkpoints finally came to an end.

Along the way, Commander Xia was faced with alternating emotions; at times he would be silent, emotionally excited and sometimes preoccupied with troubles. He could not imagine what would happen to his family, as he was a mere human being lost in the war. As the Construction Area encouraged birth giving, and strictly prohibited singlehood especially among the women, it had

led him into marriage. As his wife had now become a "widow" ... he must have sufficient mental strength to live with this fact.

When Luo Yuan opened the box filled with a dozen canned food, he found out that the canned foods were packed into wooden materials too. The outer part of the can was carved with simple symbol to indicate the type of the food, date and level. Eight cans of meat were ranked as level four, while the other four were vegetables ranked as level one.

Level four also symbolized the dark blue rank, while level one depicted that they were white.

Apart from being emotionally excited since five in the morning when they woke up, up to the current time of four o' clock in the evening, they did not stop along the way. Other than water, they had consumed nothing at all. Luo Yuan then opened up all the cans.

These things could be relatively precious and expensive for common people, but were nothing much to Luo Yuan and his company, as they were not only used to having deep blue rank meat but also those of green ranks.

The meat in the can appear to be flour-like in texture as the tough meat of mutated beasts had already been ground. Starch seemed to have been added in to make it taste better than how it originally tasted. It was not only rich in flavor but also easy for consumption. As the group had not tasted even a single ounce of spices for a long period of time, it had stimulated their appetite.

The group even finished the dehydrated vegetables.

There was quite a distance between the first line of defense and the Construction Area. It was only 7 o'clock in the evening, but Luo Yuan could finally see the dim lights from afar!

## Chapter 253: Rejected

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Walking closer, they realized that it was a 60-meter-tall giant lighthouse. There were a few of them in the distance, but they were no longer used for guiding directions. Instead, it gave out a glaring light like a mini sun in the dark, illuminating the place as bright as day. Attracted by the light, countless mutated insects gathered around the lighthouse. Some of them were even killed by the huge electric arc that let out an occasional spark or two.

The base of the lighthouse was covered with dead insects. As Luo Yuan and the gang were walking towards the lighthouse, they spotted another pile of dead insect bodies – about 40 meters high – on top of the existing ones. At this rate, the lighthouse would probably be buried by the dead insects, come next morning.

The lighthouse was like a giant insect's vacuum; almost all the nearby insects congregated at a single spot. There were hardly any insects along the way as Luo Yuan continued his journey. After passing the other three lighthouses, a silhouette of a city appeared in front of them.

It was a city filled with darkness. It was around 8 o' clock at night and the sky was already almost pitch black. There were no lights at all from the faraway cities; it was immersed in complete darkness. If not for the funnels that were puffing thick smoke, it could very well pass off as a dead city. The air was reeking of industrialism; some of which foul, while some were choking. The odor was even stronger than it was prior to the apocalypse.

Most of them who were used to fresh air were not able to adapt to



this environment, and started coughing. It was probably not being managed properly as the fumes were released straight into the air. But at that moment, even radical environmentalists would be rejoicing. At least one of them in the gang was enjoying the stench.

...

"What is that? Is that a wall?" Luo Yuan asked curiously about the shadow that was surrounding the city.

Although Commander Xia's vision was not as good as Luo Yuan's, he knew what he was talking about. "That would be a carnivorous vine. They are dangerous and capable of swallowing an entire animal. Here, we use it as a wall. It works even better than a real wall, and although it is not able to defend us against large-size mutated beasts, it can stop the smaller ones from entering."

The wall of carnivorous vines was five meters high. There were mouths that looked like flowers snapping open and shut, while exuding a sweet fragrance to attract its prey. They were not scarce after the apocalypse, and throughout his journey, Luo Yuan had seen more than 10 types of its species. However, using them as a wall was a first. It was something new to him, and he could not help but observe it a few more times.

They walked around it and found the entrance. The wooden door was six meters tall and five meters wide. It was locked. The moment they arrived, a sound was heard from a hidden loud speaker.

"Everyone, stop walking. Who are you? Which unit are you from?"

"We're the survivors from the outlands!" shouted Luo Yuan, not wanting to cause any trouble.

The person on the other side paused, "Please flash your ID towards the camera, and stay back for the inspection."

There really were a few cameras around. Luo Yuan hopped off the giant lizard, showed his ID and waited patiently. The sentinel was efficient, as after half a minute, the door swung open. A team of four fully armed soldiers walked out. One of them checked his ID carefully, and looked at Luo Yuan, "This is yours... How about the rest? All of you, please come here for identification."

Luo Yuan felt a little uncomfortable. Perhaps it was the fact that these enforcers gave off a forceful and condescending vibe. But soon, he felt better. He reminded himself that this was the reconstruction area, not the wilderness. He should begin to adapt to the norms here by now, as he no longer called the shots.

Everybody flashed their IDs. Once the identification process was over and done with, the person said, "The IDs are valid, but we regret to inform you that as there were no survivors coming in for the past two months, the service center had been shut down and nothing can be done now. I'm afraid you are not allowed to enter the city today. Please come back tomorrow instead."

"What did you just say? We traveled a long way to get here, and

we are already right in front of the door. Do you expect us to sleep outside for the night?" Before Luo Yuan could finish his sentence, Lin Xiaoji could not help but interrupt. Anger was written all over his face; the rest were dissatisfied too.

"We're really sorry but there's nothing we can do. This is especially for quarantine purposes, as the most important task cannot be carried out at night. For the safety of Desert City, we are unable to let you in." said one of the soldiers, in all seriousness. Lin Xiaoji was just about to retort, but he was stopped by Luo Yuan. "That's enough, let's just sleep outside tonight!"

"Thank you for understanding!" a soldier said, with a sarcastic look on his face.

The door was then shut. Looking at the city of darkness upon them, they had lost all their excitement.

After walking a few hundred meters away, they found a relatively flat space to be their campsite of the night. Instinctively, they then collected some twigs nearby to start a fire.

The atmosphere was depressing, even Luo Yuan was down in the dumps. He understood that it was a mandatory procedure, as they had been in the wilderness where they could have been infected by unknown strains of viruses and bacteria. That was clearly the reason why they would not let them in just like that. Although it was well-understood, he was not pleased with the misfortune. Of all people, why must this happen to him?

They talked for a little while, before everyone sat quietly, deep in their own thoughts. As they will be entering the reconstruction area tomorrow, many things that they never had to worry about before, such as jobs and life, ought to be discussed now.

‘Pre-apocalypse’. This term was made up of two words that were so mundane, yet so wonderful. Even the thought of it was enchanting. Only fictional characters would rejoice when they knew that war was coming, but to most people, they were sick of wars. After all, you only have one life, and peace was what most people wanted.

The city not too far away was really quiet and peaceful. Even out of the city, there were hardly any mutated beasts out there. They were like two different worlds, one was heaven while the other was hell. They did not have to put their lives at risk there, nor did they have to be in a constant state of fear. They could even have the luxury of a nine-to-five life there like they used to.

It was a full moon night today; the clear moonlight emitted a mesmerizing halo. Luo Yuan could not remember what the date was today, and he could not determine whether it was summer or fall. It felt like forever since he left prior to the apocalypse, so long that it was almost wiped out completely from his memory.

He frowned and snapped out of his thoughts. There was a light quake on the ground, with soft sounds of a collision. Noises could be heard as if buildings were collapsing from a distance, as well as people screaming. He stood up and looked into the horizon.

The noise sounded like the desert bug that he encountered

previously.

"Luo Yuan, what's wrong?" Hua Jiahui asked curiously, as she noticed Luo Yuan standing up.

They did not have such sharp sense of sound like Luo Yuan did, so they were oblivious of their surroundings!

Luo Yuan shook his head and said, "Nothing!"

It was too far away from what was happening anyway. As the bug was elusive, it was pointless for him to rush there. Also, the city should have good defense force. The sound of collapsing buildings still echoed from time to time, while the crying and screaming noises were getting more and more intense. Although the hysterical screams were just a few kilometers away, Luo Yuan could empathize the people's fear and desperation.

The defense system of the city was highly efficient. In a few minutes, gunshots and roars of cannons could be heard. The sound became weaker as it dissipated through the air. Not long after, Luo Yuan's facial expression had changed. It seemed like there were going to be more than one bug coming their way.

# Chapter 254: Above

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In the Desert City's mayor's office at the City Hall, a middle-aged man was frowning while flipping through the documents that he had received today. The sound of the flipping pages filled the room. As the mayor of the reconstruction area, he had to bear with a great amount of stress every day. Within merely six months, the 35-year-old had his forehead filled with wrinkles. He had also lost weight, his bulging tummy during the pre-apocalypse was now nowhere to be seen.

The office windows were plastered by thick, black papers which kept the room warm. The fan did not help at all, as he was sweating non-stop. Due to the lack of power supply in the reconstruction area, even the leader of the city was not able to enjoy the air-conditioning in his office. The production of such luxury for human enjoyment had been curbed a long time ago.

He was scribbling instructions on the documents, from time to time. Suddenly, his phone rang unexpectedly. He took out his phone; it was the director of the information monitoring center. His body tensed up, as he quickly glanced at the clock on the wall – it was 9 o'clock in the evening. Everyone should be off work by this time, no? He had a bad hunch about this. A phone call at this hour would only mean that there could've been an accident.

He picked up the call, looking unhappy.

"Is this what you got for me? How could you not have seen this coming?" questioned Mayor Wu.

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"This is not the first time that this happened. I don't want to hear your excuses. Go ahead and say it to those dead victims! What I need is a guarantee!" In frustration, he accidentally broke his shirt's button from pulling onto it in anger. After his venting streak, he hung up. The mayor knew that it was not entirely the safety monitoring center's fault, but they did not have a better solution for the underground monitor.

...

"Secretary Zhang, it seems like you have been made aware of the present ongoings. The district has been locked down, and the guard troops are making their way there. We are evacuating the people as fast as we can!" he called to notify the party secretary.

He then hung up. Feeling thirsty, he picked up his mug for some water but realized that there was nothing inside. He was frustrated. If this had happened half a year ago, the mug would have been instantly destroyed. But throughout the last six months, he encountered the same thing many times and had learned how to control himself by now.

A while later, he placed the mug at where it was and continued to flip through the documents. Not long later, his phone was ringing again. He took a look, it was the director of the information monitoring center once more. He frowned and picked up the call immediately.

"What! Not only one, but a group of them? How many of them to be exact?" Mayor Wu asked loudly, baffled at the news.

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"Have you informed Secretary Zhang and Teacher Liu?" he asked, with cold sweat dripping from his forehead. There was a loud noise coming from not too far away, gravel was slamming onto the windows. The glasses were clinking, and the ground was shaking. The door flung open – it was his secretary.

"Mayor, it's not safe to stay here anymore, we must adjourn to the safe house immediately." said his secretary, in all seriousness.

"No, as the mayor, I have to stay, you should leave now." Mayor Wu hesitated before rejecting. Although he was nervous, he had to remain calm. As the leader of the city, if he even had the cheek to run away, that would be the end of his political status. Or even worse, he would have to lose his life.

It was not the time of peace but rather chaos. From what he knew, there were at least a thousand people who were fired and killed over the years. Some of them even held a higher rank than he did.

"I will stay here to protect you." his secretary said, expressionless.

Mayor Wu nodded, he was relieved. He knew that his secretary was not merely a secretary but a level four evolved person. To him,



the common mutated beasts would be like killing animals.

Later on, the phone did not seem to stop ringing. He was giving instructions after instructions. Without them noticing, the gunshot and cannon noises were getting intense. The air was filled with the smell of smoke from the guns. The frontline city was different from the rest. It was just a step away from the real war, the last protective barricade of the reconstruction area.

Apart from a variety of powerful defense weapons, there was a master who had been stationed in the city for a long-term period. If the damages and the use of cannons had not been considered, 10 desert crypt worms or even a medium-small beast crowd could have been handled easily. But such instructions could only be used as the last straw, as there was huge political responsibility for that.

A bomb exploded not far away from the City Hall, followed by a loud thud. The dust from the wooden building were all scattered around. There was a buzzing sound in Mayor Wu's ears. He quietly clenched his fists, and his palms began to sweat.

He stood still as he knew that all this while, he had been lucky. When fangs first appeared in the apocalypse, he was traveling in Tibet with his wife and kids. When he was returning, they were stuck at the airport due to some flight issues. As he noticed that there was something wrong, he applied for sick leave with the unit. He encouraged his wife to do the same, and thus, they began to stay in Tibet for a long time.

In the beginning of the apocalypse, Tibet was still a safe place to live. When the other provinces were falling apart, there were not

many changes to Tibet. It was only when Tibet started to become more dangerous, the big immigration had begun. He successfully boarded the first batch of the immigration, and that was the turning point of his career. As there was a major shortage in all job positions, he was given a great opportunity. From a deputy class cadre before the apocalypse, he had become a department cadre in just a short span of two years.

He suddenly recalled the notice that he received from his superior. He turned to his secretary and asked, "Are the survivors here yet?"

Secretary shook his head, "I haven't heard any news about them."

Mayor Wu frowned, "That should be impossible, I heard that they would be here by tonight."

"Maybe they will be here later, perhaps they had gotten into an accident. Who are those people?" the secretary asked. He thought it was the mayor's relatives. This had happened before, but as the survivors were getting lesser and lesser, that hardly occurred anymore.

"The message came from the superiors. They are just like you, an evolved human. I heard that they're powerful." Mayor Wu told him in all honesty. They had a close relationship, as they had gone through thick and thin in the past. Moreover, as an evolved human, his secretary was capable of saving him during critical times.

The secretary got a little more serious. Perhaps a level four was powerful to most people, and his ability was equivalent to more than 10,000 people in the reconstruction area. Those who could impress his superior should be at least a level five or even a level six.

"Let me check!"

# Chapter 255: Enter

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Mayor Wu could tell from his facial expression that he was not paying attention to what he was saying. He probably did not inform the sentinel handling the registrations down below. But he did not say anything, as he was used to such a treatment, from a long time ago. All he did was to nod and say, "Go now and come back soon!"

After the emotionless secretary left the office, a wry smile was plastered upon Mayor Wu's face.

The evolved human had belonged to a unique group, they were incredibly strong and rebellious. No matter how much they tried to hide, they had an indescribable hatred towards ordinary people. Some radical ones even thought that they were beyond human – being the chosen ones and the savior of the apocalypse. The ordinaries were not worthy of leading them.

It seemed like the people in the reconstruction area were one and united on the surface, but internally, there were much contradictories and politics within. If not for the war with everyone's life at stake, there would certainly be a civil war between the evolved humans and the ordinary.

...

The sound of the bombing was rumbling like thunder; the air was filled with a pungent smell of smoke.

"Luo Yuan, don't go, it's too dangerous," said Huang Jiahui to Luo Yuan, who was holding onto his sword tightly. "They didn't let us enter the city, why should we care about anything going on there now?" Wang Shishi said in certainty.

Commander Xia was listening carefully. Although his hearing was not as good as Luo Yuan's, but from the density and the sound of the bombing, he could roughly analyze what was happening.

"That shouldn't be a problem, such an attack will not be able to withstand the highly defensive frontline city. From the sound of it, they are only using something small, the big ones are not being used yet."

If they were to use heavy artilleries, the number of casualties would be a greater one. Commander Xia thought to himself, with an unusually calm expression. Soldiers like him who had been through bloody situations were very used to death, and unless they were comrades, the lives of strangers were just numbers to him.

Luo Yuan sighed and loosened the grip of his sword. This was not the wilderness that he was familiar with, but a real war with bombs everywhere. Missiles were falling just like rain, and if they hit him, there was no guarantee that he would be alright. Although he was strong, his body was still made of flesh. His +14 Physique could handle a normal bullet, but not the uniquely improved rifle bullets in the apocalypse, let alone an artillery shell.

To be in the battlefield hastily was too dangerous. They were solemn while listening to the bombing sound quietly. None of them had expected to witness the attack of a mutated beast even if

they could enter the reconstruction area.

At that moment, the door opened slowly. Everybody looked at the door in shock. Soon, a young soldier ran towards them, "Is there anyone named Luo Yuan here?!"

"Yes, I am! What's wrong?" Luo Yuan asked, yet remaining seated while staring at him in doubt. Although he understood why they were rejected earlier, it was impossible to be nice to them again.

Strangely, the young soldier was a bundle of nerves. His heart was pounding like a thunderstorm, and said quickly, "You guys can come in now, there's someone who would like to see you."

"You are the one who wouldn't let us in, but now you've changed your mind? Didn't we have to pass through quarantine first?" Wang Shishi asked without thinking, as she was visibly displeased.

The young soldier who was quite serious earlier was lost for words when he saw this beautiful lady. He was avoiding eye contact, much like he would if he saw a prehistoric beast.

"Shishi, let's not make things difficult for this soldier. Since we are now allowed in, let's just go in." said Luo Yuan. Although he was still skeptical, he knew that it was no use asking this soldier, as the answer would be revealed soon. Wang Shishi had only wanted to vent, but after hearing what Luo Yuan said, she did not utter a word anymore.

"Oh yes, what about our battle beasts? Can we bring them along into the city?" asked Luo Yuan.

"I'm ... I'm sorry but we have a rule, that battle beasts would have to be placed in a designated area." the soldier said.

"There are forts everywhere, would they be killed by mistake?" asked Luo Yuan. The two battle beasts had been following him through the apocalypse, especially the giant lizard. Without it, they would not have been able to make it to the reconstruction area. It would be such a shame if they were to be mistakenly killed.

"No, after they have undergone the domestication monitoring qualification, we will mark them and implant an identification chip into their bodies. They will be protected by law, and all you will have to do is to pay a fee every month."

Luo Yuan nodded. After all, the city was not suitable for the giant beasts. It was highly populated, and even if the giant beasts did not hurt anyone on purpose, with a body size that huge, it could hurt people by accident should they be roaming around.

About the fee, he was not worried at all. To a strong evolved human like him, money was just a number. Luo Yuan got the giant lizard and king kong to stay where they were, before following the soldier into the door. A middle-aged man in a suit greeted them; he was the secretary.

The secretary looked at him with all due respect, and bowed a little bit. He was not as respectful when he was with Mayor Wu. In

his eyes, Luo Yuan had a burning glow surrounding him. He felt that he was on flames as he got closer. He looked down immediately, as he dared not look at him straight into the eye. His evolution strength was mysterious and strange. He could see the halo of a person through one's eyes. To put it simply, a common person's halo would look as weak as candlelight, and in comparison, Luo Yuan's halo was like a mini sun.

He had never seen such huge halo before, apart from those on the strong mutated beasts. He had now met a level five evolved human, and the size was incomparable. It was like comparing a scorching sun and a dim moon.

Before Luo Yuan could even open his mouth, he said respectfully, "Hi Mr. Luo, the mayor would like to see you." Luo Yuan was skeptical. After a brief thought, he knew roughly what was going on and said, "Please lead the way."

If money gave people the guts, skills gave confidence for people to grow bolder. If he was invited by such a VIP in the past, he would be restless or anxious, but now, he felt as cool as a cucumber. Huo Dong and the rest were hardly affected as well. Struggling in the cruel apocalypse had gave them a sense of peace, as they had lost their fear of power.

The secretary did not seem to care but walked with his head low while leading the way. Desert City was small; it was probably just the size of a town before the apocalypse. The houses on both sides were low, most of them were only two to three-storey high buildings made of wood. Windows could hardly be seen.



The roads were full of potholes, rubbish and mud. Some of the spots were damaged. Besides, the main road was being fixed with cement, while the buildings nearby had all collapsed. This place was a desert; thus, the foundation was not strong. Moreover, when they were building the city, details were not a priority. It was plain to see how such a shallow foundation could give rise to a possible collapse.

They passed by an industrial area that was heavily guarded. Under the moonlight, the massive amount of artilleries and armored vehicles gave out a chilling vibe. Even if they were invaded by crypt worms, the weapons were not affected at all.

There was absolutely no light in the industrial area. The only poor excuse of a glimmer they could see was a dimmed light through the door gap clanking with sounds of machinery, depicting how diligently factories were, working all day and all night. 10 minutes later, Luo Yuan and the gang walked into a three-storey building.

# Chapter 256: Settled

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Name: Luo Yuan

Sex: Male

Age: 24

Birthplace: Jiangnan Province, Donghu City (To be confirmed)

Ability: Earth-based unique evolved human, Speed based evolved human (Additional confirmation needed)

Level: 5 (To be confirmed)

Earth-based evolved human

Danger level: A (included in key surveillance target)

The sound of bombings was rumbling outside, while the air was filled with smoke. Mayor Wu remained calm on his seat while meticulously going through the document. The information on the document was too brief and lacked the details he needed. Most of them were described in uncertainties. As a matter of fact, ever since he received the fax in the afternoon, Mayor Wu had been reading this piece of document several times already. He could even memorize the whole thing by now.

Level five, this was a level five evolved human. His secretary was a level four evolved human. Although it was just a level apart, putting the difference of strength aside, there were 10,000 level four evolved people in the entire country, and only 100 to 200 level fives. Such people were indeed rare. Most of them were stationed in the military site, key industrial bases or major mineral areas. He had never seen one in his life.

At that moment, there was a knock on his door.

"Mayor, they are here."

Hearing the secretary's voice made Mayor Wu rejoice, "Invite them in now!"

He tried his best to calm himself down but there was a sense of urgency and tension in his voice.

The door was opened, a gang of them walked in together along with a thick smell of smoke. The narrow office had now become crowded.

"You guys have come a long way; we didn't expect any survivors to be still out there. Come sit, please make yourself at home! Little Zhen, make us some tea right now." Mayor Wu stood up, he was smiling while observing the gang.

He did not know which one of them was Luo Yuan, but the latter's magical vibe made him very recognizable.

He was tall and handsome, with smooth skin. He gave out a clean impression but he was definitely not a pretty boy. In fact, he looked majestic and a tad unapproachable.

Although the office was small, there were two long benches. Luo Yuan sat down and said, "We don't need tea, we don't drink that anymore. It would be great if we could have some water instead."

Mayor Wu was open-minded, "Water is still the best, tea leaves nowadays can be tasteless."

Water was then served immediately. Luo Yuan picked up a glass, took a sip and finished it.

Mayor Wu was taken by surprise, as the water was still boiling hot.

Luo Yuan put down the glass and asked, "Let's be straightforward. There's something that I don't understand. As mayor, you should be very busy, especially at this hour. Why did you call us here in the middle of the night? I don't think all survivors receive the same treatment, do they?"

Luo Yuan had his own speculations, but it was best to be upfront about it and to seek clarification. With his increasing ability, he was more inclined to solve issues right away. His voice was sweet and soft, the pace, tone and manner was just right, yet it exuded a stressful vibe.

Mayor Wu was tense; beads of sweat dotted his forehead. He said immediately, "That's not true, we have been following you since your arrival, as Mr. Luo's impressive ability can hardly be ignored. You need to know that this is a high-surveillance district. As such, there are cameras monitoring anytime and anywhere. We have already gotten news even before you came."

"Oh, I see!" Luo Yuan was not surprised at the answer. Once he stepped foot into the reconstruction area, he had already noticed the many unmanned aerial vehicles flying in the sky. At that point, he did feel slightly uncomfortable, as the feeling of being constantly monitored wasn't exactly his cup of tea.

Meanwhile, the bombing sounds outside did not stop at all, including the wailing and screaming. There was an uproar in a specific area one kilometer away from them, and the ground was shaking. Mayor Wu could not help it anymore, as he begged, "You know how bad it is out there. I hereby represent Desert City to officially ask for Mr Luo's help!"

"Please call me Luo Yuan. Although I would love to help, but I reckon there's nothing I can do." Luo Yuan sighed and shook his head, "There are bombings everywhere, I will not risk my life out there, unless you are willing to withdraw your army."

There was a change in Mayor Wu's facial expression, "This..."

There were bombings all over the place on the battlefield, and it was really unfair to ask such a favor of him. After all, he was only a

civilian who had just recently arrived as a survivor. It was too much to ask for such a sacrifice. On the other hand, it was definitely a major risk to withdraw the army. If anything happened, he would be the one to be blamed.

He could not make up his mind, and was pacing around in the same spot with his facial expressions changing swiftly. The secretary walked to him quickly and said something to him. Mayor Wu hesitated and asked Luo Yuan, "Mr. Luo, can you guarantee that you are able to kill all the crypt worms? This is a massive responsibility, especially in the political sphere."

"What's wrong with you? You are asking Boss Luo for a favor, and should the task fail, you want him to be responsible for it? What a way to shirk your own responsibility." said Wang Shishi, indignantly.

Everyone was unhappy.

"I'm so sorry, that's not what I meant. I just wanted to be sure. Of course, I will not ask Mr. Luo to undertake such a responsibility." Mayor Wu was embarrassed. As a politician, those words were merely formality.

"Don't worry about it. I have killed a few of them before coming here, so it shouldn't be a problem!"

"Okay, okay, I'll make a phone call now." Mayor Wu said in excitement. He then took out his mobile phone and started dialing.

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"What? Our superior has just instructed us to withdraw... this isn't practical joke, right?" A soldier whose face was covered in black soot asked angrily.

"This is an order. We will need to withdraw immediately, and cease all fire," an officer said, while looking at the time, "There will be someone taking over soon."

"From which team?" another soldier asked. "Isn't that robbing? If heavy artilleries were not forbidden, we would have killed all the damn crypt worms from the beginning."

"Why do you ask so much? Move faster, stop wasting any more precious time."

Soon, the bombing in the district stopped.

Just when the army was gradually withdrawing, a silhouette of a human flew by. The soldier on the edge could only feel a strong wind breeze past him. When he turned around, there was nothing.

"Did you see a person running by?" A soldier asked as if he saw a ghost.

"You must be thinking too much!" Another soldier quipped.

"Keep quiet, that's an evolved human." The officer knew more than they did, as he was very well aware that there would be strong evolved human coming. He was curious at first, to see what kind of evolved human managed to pique their superior's interest. But before he could even see clearly, the person had disappeared into the darkness.

He was still deep in his thoughts, and suddenly, there was a loud screech not too far away, "So fast?"

The debris in front was thrashed upon heavily, scattered the junk everywhere, and by this time, the officer had noticed that the crypt worm was already cut into half.

The crypt worm had been fighting with humans for a long time now. It had familiarized itself with human techniques and built some experiences around it. The crypt worm had actually been hiding itself within the debris in the building. With the help of some planks, it was devouring dead bodies blatantly. The small cannons that they used were not helpful at all. Despite a number of attacks, the crypt worm was barely harmed.

Little did they know that this evolved human who had just arrived, was able to give this crypt worm a critical hit. What happened next shocked them even more. It was a blurry shadow that shone like a flash in the dark, one that was impossible to discern. The crypt worm that was cut into half, was now cut into four in a blink of an eye.

The shadow stopped. It looked towards their direction and disappeared from where it was.



"I... I'm not dreaming, am I?"

"Stop talking nonsense!"

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The officer spoke into the speaker; his voice was shaking, "An evolved human... was... here, the crypt worm in District A2 has been vanquished!"

# Chapter 257: Newspaper

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People were talking in unison at the information monitoring center in Desert City; the commotion there was as noisy as a marketplace. This center controlled the monitoring system throughout the city and it also served as a hub for information exchange.

In the apocalypse, as the eyes and ears of the city, there was no exaggeration of how important this center was. This rare cemented building in the Desert City was more than enough to prove it.

As a matter of fact, its main office area was ten meters under the refuge floors. The information center would still be safely untouched, even if the entire Desert City was destroyed despite its strong defence system.

"District C3 is now at peace, the crypt worm is presumed to be dead," a monitor reported loudly in excitement. A minute later, "Same goes to my area, there's nothing here in District A5," another monitor said.

"The monitoring system in District D4 has been destroyed, but the army had been withdrawn, I believe things are settled by now."

The announcements of the reports had come and gone, making the routine atmosphere lively again. The red dots on the big screen on the wall were disappearing quickly. The interval was less than half a minute.

"What is happening?" One of them removed his earphones and asked curiously.

"Yea, how are the red dots disappearing so fast?" another person asked in confusion.

"This is way too unusual, should we report this to the departmental head?"

"I don't think so, as he has already been receiving calls out there. As he is still not back, my only guess is that this is about the matter at hand."

...

The crypt worms' level was not high, even the highest one was only at a light-green level. They were incomparable with the Desert City's strong defense system, where they could be killed with one heavy artillery shot. But even the strongest creature was fragile inside. Humans were capable of killing a beast, but they could not avoid bacteria. Should the mutated beasts ever invade the city, the risk would be multiplied.

That was when an evolved person was needed.

For Luo Yuan's ability, such a battle was easy as one, two, three. Moreover, Desert City was rather small. In merely half an hour, he managed to kill most of them. When Luo Yuan got back to the City

Hall, there were more people in the small office; even more crowded than before. After Mayor Wu's introduction, only then he realized that most of the leaders in Desert City were there.

Courteous and pretentious conversations filled the room but Luo Yuan was not interested. He excused himself along with the gang with a good reason of being exhausted from the journey. Of course, Luo Yuan did not have to worry about their accommodation. With Little Zhen, the secretary leading the way, they arrived at a 'high class' area and stopped at a 'villa' that was three-storeys high.

"Mr Luo, all of you will be staying here for the night. We will arrange something else for you guys tomorrow, please do not mind this." Secretary Little Zhen said, with respect.

"I don't demand much on accommodation. As long as it is livable, it's fine by me." Luo Yuan said.

It would be ridiculous if they were to even mind how their sleeping conditions were. During the apocalypse, they were thankful if they had the chance to put up in the military base and the cave. Once, they were even sleeping under the sun.

"Here are the keys. Oh right!" Little Zhen thought of something and said, "There will not be water nor electricity supply after 10 o'clock at night in this district. If you would like to wash up, you will have to do it before that. It's late, please allow me to excuse myself now."

Once Luo Yuan took the keys, Little Zhen left quickly. As a

sensory-based evolved person, his sensory perception was much more sensitive than the others were. Immense pressure was everywhere, it gave him an illusion that he was not facing a human, but a scary level-five mutated beast. Even the short exchange of words mentally exhausted him, and he would have already lost control if he did not calm himself down.

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Naturally, the villa could not be compared with the ones before the apocalypse. It was just a three-storey wooden house. There was not much difference with the ones they saw by the street. But if they were to look carefully, there were a few differences. The making of the villa was more detailed, and there were no gaps between the planks. Luo Yuan did an evaluation secretly and found out that the wood that was used, was anything but ordinary. It was a blue-level wood. Although such grade of wood was everywhere in the apocalypse, it was not valuable, but considering the challenges to process such a wood, it was indeed admirable.

Not only that, the materials they used were luxurious. The door alone was 5 centimeters thick, and the wall was 15 centimeters. Speaking of defense, it could be easily better than the normal 30 centimeters cement wall.

Luo Yuan then opened the door, they could not wait to go and head straight to the living room.

Wang Xianguang found the light switch in the dark, and with a flick, the room was lit up.

Wang Shishi saw that there was a couch in the living room. She ran towards it with glee and sat down. "Such a big house! It would be great if we could stay here permanently."

"Yea, everything is wonderful here," said Huang Jiahui, as she picked up a piece of cloth from the coffee table and wiped away the dust.

"Sigh, you are all so easily contented. With Boss Luo's ability, we can do even better than this in the future!" said Huo Dong in excitement. From what the secretary said, this should be just an expedient. To get closer to Boss Luo, much flattering and cajoling was needed to get into his good books.

He was just a businessman before the apocalypse. He probably only knew one deputy chief and bought him a meal, they were just mere acquaintances. He was invisible to the city leaders, as they have never met before. But today, not only the leaders were passionate, they were even trying to brown-nose him. Although he was not the main person, being part of the gang, he was proud of himself.

"Don't talk about a small city like this, I believe Boss Luo will get the same treatment even if he goes to the New Capital City. I guess there is no level five evolved person there at all. The leaders would be crazy if they don't want to get closer to you." Commander Xia said while laughing.

They were excited, but once they relaxed, there was an

unstoppable vibe within them. Luo Yuan looked at the time and interrupted, "It's already 9:30 at night now. It's late, go wash up now, and we will talk tomorrow."

Only then they recalled there would be no electricity and water supply after 10 o'clock. If they did not wash up now, they would have to wait until the next day.

...

Luo Yuan briefly cleaned himself and walked to the master bedroom on the first floor. He discovered that Huang Jiahui had placed the mat properly and brought a bucket of water.

"Why don't you shower in the bathroom?" Luo Yuan asked while picking up the stack of old newspapers on the bed head.

"There are too many people in there, I'm not used to it." Huang Jiahui glanced at Luo Yuan and took off her clothes, revealing her plump body while slowly cleaning herself.

"Be patient, it will be better soon." Luo Yuan said while reading the newspaper.

"I'm grateful that we can even stay here. Compared to the harsh wilderness, this feels like heaven," said Huang Jiahui, full of emotions. She then hinted, "Hey, do you remember how long has it been since we last spent the night together?"

Luo Yuan did not say a thing. Huang Jiahui turned around and saw he was frowning, his attention was on the newspaper.



## Chapter 258: A Mind Of His Own

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Luo Yuan cleaned himself roughly and walked to the master bedroom on the first floor. He noticed that Huang Jiahui had placed the mat properly and brought a bucket of water.

"Why don't you shower in the bathroom?" Luo Yuan asked while picking up the stack of old newspapers by the headboard.

"There are too many people in there. I can't get used to it." Huang Jiahui glanced at Luo Yuan before she started taking off her clothes, revealing her plump body as she cleaned herself slowly.

"Be patient, things will get better in the future," Luo Yuan said, reading a newspaper.

"I'm grateful that we can stay here. Compared to the outside, this is like Heaven," said Huang Jiahui, full of emotion. "Hey, do you remember how long it has been since we last slept together?"

Luo Yuan did not say a thing. Huang Jiahui turned around and saw him frowning. His attention was still on the newspaper.

...

"New agricultural products harvested; reconstruction area is bidding famine farewell."

"We stand firmly before the darkness of twilight."

"Humans dictate their own destiny in unity!"

"New biocomposite research has been successful; there's hope of replacing steel completely!"

"Long March rockets have been launched successfully; they are to replace all satellites paralyzed by the magnetic storm."

"Xunlong-2 CPU is officially in production; locally produced CPU is now on par with Intel."

Luo Yuan was reading quickly. Most of the time, he would just take a glance and then flip to the next page. He would only pause to look for more details if he saw something interesting, but that did not last more than 10 seconds usually either. Considering the processing speed of his brain, it was no exaggeration to say that he could read 10 lines at one glance.

Most of the content of the newspaper was encouraging and passionate, yet at the same time also serious and oppressive. One could not relax while reading it. A battlefield was the best catalyst for technology. The threat of the mutated beasts had resulted in a big technological outbreak in the reconstruction area, which was developing rapidly. Almost a quarter of the newspaper's content was about discoveries of new materials, new technology or new techniques.

Human perseverance was beyond imagination. Although humans had been defeated by unimaginable natural disasters, beasts, and accidents, they were still standing tall. As time passed, they only seemed to become stronger. Many thought that the technology used in the military was 20 years more advanced than the technology civilians had access to, but that was inaccurate.

During times of peace, besides cutting-edge weapons, the technology used by the military was usually less advanced than that used by civilians. The military required high-reliability for the devices they used, and the latest technologies were usually the most unreliable ones. Moreover, the nuclear threat before the apocalypse had brought the world to a standstill as a whole, so there had been no hurry for any military upgrades.

This didn't just apply to China. Even in America, some military electrical devices were still using technology from the 80s. Due to its cost, technology in the military was unsatisfactory. Only during times of war, when society entered a state of emergency, did that statement become true. All the advanced technology used by civilians would then flood into the military, and all the wisdom of human beings would be exploited by the army.

This war was a hundred times more devastating than World War II. After all, World War II had been a war between humans, so there had still been room for negotiation. This time, it was a war between races. Failure was unacceptable, and there was no such thing as compromise. Failing meant dying.

...

Huang Jiahui got out of the shower and looked at Luo Yuan. There were tears rolling in his eyes. She sat on his lap and patted his back, saying flirtatiously, "Don't read anymore. You can read tomorrow. It's time for bed now."

"Wait, let me read a little more," Luo Yuan said.

...

The morning in the Desert City was quiet and peaceful. Luo Yuan held his sword in his hand as he stood on the balcony, not moving an inch. His body was exuding an oppressive vibe, but his skin was fair and smooth. There was a dim glow radiating from him. It wasn't just his skin. Even his hair, the Zhanmadao, and his clothes had a unique shining glow about them.

Will surrounded his entire body. As time passed, he suddenly noticed a strange phenomenon. His Sensory Perception was expanding quickly. He could even control all senses within three meters. There was not much improvement on the ground, though.

Luo Yuan was completely awake. If his Sensory Perception could be imprinted on his Zhanmadao, then it could naturally be imprinted on other objects as well. The massive movement of his Will could affect air molecules, and the diffusion of the air molecules could help expand his Sensory Perception. Luo Yuan did not seem to care at all, though. He was deep in thought.

Suddenly, he realized that the way he managed his Will was crude. He lacked imagination, and his application methods were

limited. He did not fully explore the system. Since the attribution of his Will was infinite, it could be applied anywhere.

Just like leaving a mark, he could imprint his Will on someone else's shirt so that that person could never escape from him. It was like the curse he had encountered before, the one that had caused unreasonable death. Although these powers were not applicable in the wilderness and were limited when it came to mutated beasts, they could be immensely helpful in the reconstruction area and human society in general.

The rules and laws in the reconstruction area were extremely strict, unlike in the wilderness, where anything could be settled by violence. In the wilderness, if you did not like someone, you could just kill them. That did not apply there, though. Violence could not solve any problems, only cause even more. No matter how confident Luo Yuan was, he did not dare offend the country. After all, it had taken them so long to earn that peaceful life. He wasn't going to keep wandering around like a savage forever.

Unlike his destructive power though, his Will left no trail. It could kill without drawing any blood.

Lin Xiaoji yawned and walked towards Luo Yuan lazily. "Boss Luo, what about our training?"

Luo Yuan looked at him and nodded. Even since they had entered the reconstruction area, there had been a change in his attitude. The old Lin Xiaoji had been afraid of Luo Yuan like a mouse afraid of a cat. Now he could talk to him like it was nothing, though. There was also something unnatural about his expression. He

always avoided eye contact when Luo Yuan was looking at him. It seemed like he had an agenda of his own ever since they had entered the reconstruction area.

# Chapter 259: Procedures

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"Secretary Zhen, sorry to trouble you with sending us breakfast!" Zhao Yali said, feeling a little embarrassed.

"It's no trouble at all. I was passing by anyway. I will have to take you all to go through some procedures later, but I don't want to keep you now," Secretary Zhen said while waving.

"What kind of procedures?" Zhao Yali asked.

"A lot of information was lost during the apocalypse, such as accounts and ID cards. Everything needs to be registered again, and there needs to be a job allocation. Oh yeah, there's also a test for the evolved people for archive purposes," Secretary Zhen explained thoroughly. He was not as reserved as the mayor's secretary.

"That's a lot," said Zhao Yali.

"It doesn't take too long actually. It can be done in a day," Secretary Zhen laughed.

"Then when can we get our documents?" Zhao Yali asked.

"You will have to wait one day."

"Can't we have them on the spot?"

Secretary Zhen gave her an awkward smile. There were many documents to be processed every day. One day was actually considered fast. Most people got their documents in three days, even though their efficiency had improved a lot since the apocalypse had started.

Zhao Yali realized she was being pushy and she said in embarrassment, "I don't know much, I'm just asking."

"Don't worry about it. You can ask anything you want."

"Oh, then I have one more question I'd like to ask. What kind of job is there for us?" That was Zhao Yali's main concern.

"Oh, about that," Secretary Zhen seemed troubled. "That will be determined by your educational and professional background as well as your working experience. If you don't have any professional skills, you will probably be assigned to work in a factory."

"Oh, I'm an accountant. I have an intermediate accounting certificate. Are there any job opportunities for me?" Zhao Yali asked worriedly.

Secretary Zhen shook his head. "It's difficult under the circumstances. Unless there's a newly built factory, it will be really hard to find a suitable job for you."



When he realized that Zhao Yali was not getting his hint, Secretary Zhen ditched all formality. "Actually, it's okay if you can't work in a factory. You can always work for the government department. We can always make an exception for talented people. If you don't mind me asking, is Mr. Luo your..."

Zhao Yali was happy at first, but his last question made her blush. "There's nothing going on between us," she said immediately.

From her facial expression, Secretary Zhen could tell that she was not telling the truth. He smiled. How could there be nothing between them when she was such a lovely woman? The other women were also beautiful. Maybe it was the beauty of the wilderness, where one could do anything they wanted. A person like him would be scared to death there, but of course, strong capabilities also came with that life. Without them, it would be hell to live in the wilderness.

Secretary Zhen smiled politely. His mission was to ensure that Luo Yuan stayed in Desert City. He had to make him stay, even if that offended his superior. To his superior, a level-5 evolved person might not seem important, but it would probably be nice to have Luo Yuan there. He was the savior after all. Knowing that he was there would allow them to sleep peacefully. Just like during the invasion of the crypt worm, with him around, they would not have to involve anybody else or suffer any heavy losses.

...

After breakfast, they all followed Secretary Zhen.

The three-storey accreditation center was not too far from the small district. It was actually only a few minutes away.

It was so much better to work as a group, because they could help each other fill in the application forms. The procedure went really smooth. Even Zhao Yali's accounting certificate was completed successfully with the help of a few officers. Compared to the time before the apocalypse, their efficiency was 10 times higher.

Still, filling in the documents was tedious. There were so many of them that it was noon by the time they were done. There were not many restaurants in the city. They had only seen a few along the way, so they went to a hotel downtown. Compared to pre-apocalypse hotel standards, this was a village-level hotel. However, under the circumstances, it was the most luxurious hotel in the city.

Although it was peak hour, the hotel was empty. There were almost no guests there, only a few waiters.

"Everyone is basically working at the factory right now. There will be more people around 10 p.m. to 11 p.m.," Secretary Zhen explained.

"They work overtime every day?" Huang Jiahui asked.

"If you work in a factory, you have to work around 12 hours a day," Secretary Zhen said, as if there was nothing wrong with that.

"That... That's not ideal for one's body, though. How can one stand for so many hours?" asked Huo Dong in astonishment. No wonder they had not seen many people on the street on their way there.

"There's nothing we can do. Most of the tasks assigned are heavy and urgent. Sometimes people don't even get a day off for several months. Nowadays most human bodies are better though, so such workload is bearable."

No one said anything, but they all sighed.

"Although the workload is heavy, people working in the back-end have it well compared to soldiers. At least there's less pressure on them," Commander Xia said, shaking his head.

They had all lost their appetite. The atmosphere had gotten heavy. They just finished their meal hastily and headed to their final destination, which was the Evolved Person Registration Center.

Initially, Secretary Zhen had thought there were only three of them, but little did he know that there were actually four. He thought the girl with the light-green skin was an evolved person, but as a matter of fact, she was not. He distanced himself quietly. He did not mind evolved people at all, but not everyone was able to maintain their sanity after they evolved. Most of them looked strange, and not just in skin color. He had seen a couple of people with long body hair and scales. A particularly powerful person had

even evolved into a giant.

This was not an evolved person though, just someone whose skin color had changed. Still, he could not help but be cautious. He did not realize Luo Yuan was watching his reaction.

"She has been parasitized by moss. You can treat her as an evolved person or an ordinary person," Luo Yuan explained.

Secretary Zhen was shocked, but he forced a smile. "That's... That's not what I was thinking."

"Are you worried that she's contagious?" Luo Yuan asked.

Although Luo Yuan's voice was soft and soothing, Secretary Zhen felt a stressful force coming from him. It was as if Luo Yuan could see everything going on in his mind. He knew it was pointless to hide before such a powerful person, so he decided to be honest, "Yes... I was worried about that, but I'm not anymore. She has been with you for a long time and nothing has happened, so that means that it's not contagious."

He was getting more and more comfortable, until he eventually asked, "Can I write a report on her? I think the Biological Research Institute will be very interested in her."

Everyone looked unhappy.

Chen Jiayi had turned pale. She looked really afraid. Luo Yuan

thought about it and said, "She is still young. I think there's no need to take her there. The sample you took should be good enough."

"Yes, of course it is. Normal evolved people understand this. Human experiments have been useless to the Biological Research Institute. The most they would do was do some blood tests on her."

Secretary Zhen understood why were they unhappy. Those with any basic biological knowledge knew that with current technology, slicing was not needed, but ordinary people did not know.

"A blood test is not needed either," Luo Yuan said. Nobody could know if they were experimenting with cloning after all. Morality usually prevented people from trying cloning, but those days nobody could guarantee anything.

"This..." Secretary Zhen was in a pickle. If the blood test was a no-go, could they at least take a bone marrow sample from her?

Suddenly, something miraculous happened. Chen Jiayi extended her hand, and a massive amount of moss grew on her smooth skin in the blink of an eye. Everyone gasped.

"That... That's unbelievable!"

"Alright, we will give you a sample of moss later. Go ahead and test all you want now. Do you know what to do?" Luo Yuan said.

## Chapter 260: Drugged

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Initially, Luo Yuan had thought that the Evolved Person Identification Test would be some kind of sci-fi fantasy experience, or at least involve some complicated devices.

When he saw the real thing though, he was left speechless.

"This is the identification test?" Luo Yuan pointed at the basement in confusion. There were mutated beasts of all sizes locked in there.

"Yes, Mr. Luo. A battle is the most straightforward way to test an evolved person. No devices exist to replace tests like these. Of course, what we have here is pretty crude. The most we could test would be a level-3 evolved person. For further identification, you would have to go to a bigger city, or even straight to a battlefield," said a notary standing next to him.

Luo Yuan noticed the size of the mutated beasts. The biggest one was only approximately four meters. Furthermore, considering that they had been locked and tortured for a long time, most of the beasts had grown inactive and idle. Their battle ability was not comparable to that of beasts living in the wilderness.

Everyone looked at each other. They were thinking that this was child's play. Luo Yuan aside, most of them could kill those beasts easily. Because of Luo Yuan, they had almost never stopped consuming light-green or green level superfood. Each of them had a Physique of about +12, not to mention their sword training and

sharp weapons. Most of them had killed blue level mutated beasts along the way, perhaps not 100, but at least 10 of them.

Finally, Luo Yuan said, "Bring it on. Give me the one with the highest level."

"That's too risky. Would you want to try one level below instead?" the notary looked Secretary Zhen, sweating profusely.

Wang Shishi could not help but laugh. Everyone else was smiling too.

"Don't worry, go ahead and release it!" Secretary Zhen said impatiently. He was blushing slightly from embarrassment.

"But..." The notary was in a pickle. That was not how the procedure went. Although the Secretary had told him to do it, if anything happened, he'd have to bear his share of the responsibility.

"This is Mayor Wu's VIP. If he wants you to release it, please do so. I will take all responsibility!" Secretary Zhen said impatiently again. This was starting to get on his nerves. It was ridiculous for the notary to question him. He would not have brought Luo Yuan all the way there if he had been a common evolved person.

After being reassured, the notary took a remote control out and pressed a button. The heavy iron gate lifted slowly with a harsh noise. A giant beast with horns and sharp teeth was laying on the

ground. Its eyelids seemed heavy, and its eyes looked dead. It was staring into space without moving as if it was a sculpture. If it was not for the water vapor squirting, everyone would have assumed that it was dead.

"You guys drugged it too much again!" Secretary Zhen coughed to hide his awkwardness as he pulled the notary aside.

"We'd have more problems if we didn't drug them enough. This is for the best," the notary said with a smirk.

"But this is not the right way to do it. I know you don't have enough staff and safety is a risk, but this is just too much! You guys have crippled the beasts! How are we supposed to run the test now? Let's use another one!" said Secretary Zhen, slightly frustrated.

The notary nodded and followed his order immediately. Soon, another iron gate was lifted, this time a better one. After 10 seconds, a giant beast made its way out slowly. Before it could even take a breath though, it fell to the floor. It struggled for awhile, unable to get up anymore. It only took a few steps.

Secretary Zhen wanted the Earth to open up and swallow him.

"How about we try level-2 ones? Level-3 beasts are too dangerous, but level-2 should be okay. You have to know that the safety measures here are not complete. This is the best that we can do," the embarrassed notary tried to salvage the situation.



...

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Luo. These people are just trying to be cautious, that's why they drugged the beasts more than they needed to," Secretary Zhen said after leaving the place in embarrassment.

Luo Yuan waved him off, indicating that he did not mind. There was nothing wrong with what they did, considering how poor the defense system was. There were only four security guards in the entire Evolved Person Registration Center. They would not be able to keep the mutated beasts under control if they did not drug them.

Although blue-level beasts were nothing to Luo Yuan, their strength was measured in tons, thus exceeding his by a lot. A normal wall would be like a slice of tofu for them. It could not hold them in at all. Although each metal bar on the iron gate was six centimeters thick, the gate could not withstand repetitive ramming.

Secretary Zhen sent Luo Yuan to the villa, giving him a stack of food vouchers before leaving.

"Are those food vouchers? Why do they look like paper currency? I thought they were a bunch of plastic sheets," said Huo Dong in curiosity as he held one in his hand. Although Secretary Zhen had used the same voucher to pay for their meal earlier, he had not had the chance to take a closer look until now.

"What's so strange about this? They're the new paper currency. They're just in the form of a food voucher," Cao Lin said in high spirits. "Since the apocalypse, the economy has collapsed. Considering the lack of food during the war, all national resources became highly regulated. The old currency lost its value, and that's how the new currency came about."

Even since they had entered the reconstruction area, Cao Lin had been like a free bird. She looked totally relaxed. She no longer had to please anybody, or worry that she could be killed anytime. Even Luo Yuan was not as nervous as he used to be anymore.

Luo Yuan picked up a voucher to look at it. Its size and color were similar to a paper note. It also had '100' written on it, but it was a pound instead of a dollar. The four head portraits were no longer there. They had been replaced by a scene of mutated beasts getting killed in a nuclear explosion. Perhaps that was a way to give people hope that they would defeat mutated beasts one day.

There were approximately a hundred pieces of them, which was a total of 10,000 dollars, or rather 10,000 pounds. Luo Yuan checked with Commander Xia about the salary remuneration for the current market and found out that his salary was 300 pounds. Of course, that did not include other allowances or any profit he made by meat smuggling. Still, it was considered a high salary. New recruits only got 120 pounds while common workers were only getting 50 pounds, which was hardly enough to survive on.

Considering the price difference in food, the buying power of 10,000 pounds was comparable to a million pounds before the apocalypse.

"Boss Luo, what are we going to do with the money?" asked Lin Xiaoji, trying to gauge something. He looked eager to find out. He knew what Commander Xia had said that it had to be a lot of money.

"How do you want to use it? It's obvious that the money is meant for Boss Luo. Do you think you would have been treated this well without him?" Huo Dong stared at Lin Xiaoji in disdain.

Lin Xiaoji's face blushed red as he stared at Huo Dong in anger. It seemed like Huo Dong was addicted to kissing Luo Yuan's ass. He hadn't stopped even after they had entered the reconstruction area.

Looking at the majestic Luo Yuan, Lin Xiaoji, who had been about to say something, decided to just shut up and walk out the door instead.

"This young man has some attitude issues. I wonder how he even managed to survive," Commander Xia said with a scornful smile. How could he think that they would be safe once they were in the reconstruction area? Did he not understand why the government was trying to keep Luo Yuan there?

It was ridiculous for him to not appreciate what he had.

"Fortunately, Boss Luo is a nice person. If it had been someone else, they would have kicked him out ages ago," Cao Lin said.

Most of them agreed on that. Luo Yuan did not know whether he should laugh or cry. He just shook his head and said, "Let's not talk about him. Let's split up the money. I don't need this much anyway."

If this had happened last time, that amount of money would have excited him. It was different now that he had a different mindset, though. To him, money was merely a number.

He was confident that he could get whatever he wanted by using his sword.

## Chapter 261: Wedding Photo

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The next day, Commander Xia followed a few soldiers to the new Capital City for a do-over of his formalities, because he had lost contact for a long time. On the third day, Huo Dong and Lin Xiaoji received a conscription notice from the force. Huo Dong was posted at a station troop nearby. Before the apocalypse, he had been just a businessman. Under the circumstances though, whether he liked it or not, his only options were either working at the factory or enlisting in the army.

Lin Xiaoji was an evolved person, so he was posted at the frontline Army District 12 nearby. He was shocked as he had not expected to be posted there. The frontline was nothing like the station the troops were usually assigned to. It was much tougher and a lot more dangerous. He thought he would be able to find a stable, lucrative job in the handling the back-end of things, considering that he was an evolved person. He didn't want to risk his life anymore or have to please anyone. Little did he know that this would happen.

Before he departed, he looked at Luo Yuan, hoping that he could say something to get him out of this. He knew very well that what Luo Yuan said would be taken very seriously by the superior, so there was still a chance to change things. In the end, he could not bring himself to ask though. His ego did not let him. He didn't want to yield to anyone, even to someone who had saved his life.

On the fourth day, Huang Jiahui and the rest were assigned jobs. Huang Jiahui was assigned to do what she used to do, and she was actually promoted, becoming the new director of a police station in a small district nearby. Zhao Yali was assigned to the finance

department, while Mu Wenwen got a job at the Second Weapon Company in the Desert City. Chen Jiayi and the rest of the kids who were underage were sent to a local school. Initially, Wang Shishi had been sent to the same school, but no matter how they tried to convince her, she was unwilling to go.

She had lost all passion for studying. She had probably never been the kind of kid who enjoyed studying anyway. At Luo Yuan's request, she decided to stay with him, the two of them remained unemployed. Time was flying by. Besides spending most of his time training, Luo Yuan was not doing much else. He did not get any assignments from the superior, but there were people visiting him every day.

Most of the main leaders of the city had paid him a visit. In the beginning, Luo Yun had still been patient and nice, but soon he started to get annoyed. He tried to give them a hint using his Will and discovered that it was quite effective. With this, he managed to make them fear him, and eventually, there were fewer people coming to see him.

Huang Jiahui was allocated a house, but she remained at the villa. Some of them would visit sometimes, but not Zhao Yali. She did not want to be seen spending time with Luo Yuan alone in public. However, Luo Yuan had familiarized himself with the house where she was staying. Although Zhao Yali was shy and hesitant, she usually gave in to Luo Yuan. The heart wanted what it wanted after all.

Indulging in this peaceful life, Luo Yuan often thought that things had gone back to how they'd used to be before the

apocalypse began.

The occasional noise from bombs going off and smoke in the air would bring him back to reality. This was not a time of peace but of war. Many people were being killed, and blood was being shed anytime, anywhere.

Although his life was one of peace, he did not stop training.

He spent most of his time training with his saber, but he did not stop training his body using his Will either. His body began to emanate a certain kind of beauty as a result of his training. It was an indescribable feeling. If he had to put it into words, it could be said that his body used to feel as if it was covered with a layer of cotton, heavy and inflexible; but now the cotton was getting thinner, allowing his body to become flexible.

He had been eating more in recent days, unlike before, when he had not felt hungry even if he had not eaten for a whole day. Fortunately, there was still plenty of superfood in storage, or else the amount of food he consumed every day would be insufficient, even with Huang Jiahui's salary.

This odd behavior did not worry Luo Yuan though, as he noticed that the more food he ate, the more attributes he gained. Although it was not visible on the attributes panel, he could feel it in his body. He used to be able to jump seven meters from the ground, but he had never been able to reach the top of the villa. Now though, he could reach the top if he tried, and could even move the giant rock that he had failed to move before.

It was an overall improvement. Apart from his magical attributes, including Sensory Perception and Will, his other attributions had shown a certain degree of growth as well. Sometimes he felt like he was a growing seed, his body going through a transformation that nobody could understand.

Perhaps his Will was subconsciously activating a positive change in his body. He was not sure how long the transformation would take or how much it would raise his attributes, but it was something exciting, and it was boosting his mood.

...

As the air-tight subway stopped, Commander Xia came out of the subway station. He looked tired, excited and worried at the same time. He had just come back from the New Capital City, where he had gone to undergo all the necessary procedures. He made a quick stop at Lanhui City. The city that used to be his home now felt like a complete stranger. There were many more factories there with more funnels than there'd used to be when he'd left a year ago. It looked nothing like before, and it made him feel afraid.

He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and walked in the direction of his house. There were no buses, so he had to walk. He was walking fast along the way, but his footsteps became heavy as he approached his home.

He knew from the Military Political Department 9 that a death report had been sent to his family. He had lost contact for almost



half a year, so his beautiful wife must have come to terms with his death. His young children would be like strangers to him. Maybe they had started living on their own already.

As he thought about that, his heart filled with mixed feelings. It didn't matter, He would still pay them a visit. If his wife had moved on, he would give her his blessing. He would not blame her for anything. The only thing he could blame was the world.

He took out the cigarettes he had just bought, lit one up, took a puff, and then put it out using his hand. He walked quickly to the district where his house was. The district was empty, and there was nobody around. He had gotten used to that sight. In the apocalypse, nobody was allowed to do remain idle. Even old people had to do things that they were not capable of.

He was strangely relaxed as he walked towards his home. The door was locked, so he took out the keys that were hanging around his neck. Ever since the plane crash, he had been hanging all his precious belongings around his neck to avoid losing them.

When he opened the door, his mind went blank. He stood there for awhile before he walked into the living room. The house was clean and neat. There was barely anything different. His wedding photo was still hanging on the wall. In the photograph, his smile was stiff, but his wife was smiling happily.

## Chapter 262: Legend

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It was early in the morning when Huo Dong shouted from outside, "What are you doing, Boss Luo?"

Luo Yuan pushed the door open and saw Huo Dong panting. He was holding big bags full of stuff.

"You, too? I appreciate the effort, but I don't need these. Please take them back," Luo Yuan said as he shook his head.

"It's nothing valuable. They were just given out by the troops. You know that I'm all by myself. It's impossible for me to finish it all. If I don't give them to you, I'll have to let them rot," Huo Dong chuckled, standing straight in his lieutenant uniform. The military was a great training base. He was already advancing there within a short period of time.

"You think I don't know about military regulations? You're not young anymore, it's time for you to plan your future. Get married if you get the opportunity," Luo Yuan teased him.

"I'm used to being alone. Perhaps in the future, when everything is more stable. Or maybe I'll become a cuckold if I'm successful," Huo Dong laughed.

Luo Yuan sighed internally. He tried to avoid the topic by asking softly, "How's the situation right now?"

Huo Dong knew he was not asking about his personal life, but about what was happening out there. Obviously, that kind of information was classified, so he hesitated before he said softly, "I don't know much, to be honest. I'm just working in the back office, but I've noticed that the use of ammunition in the warehouse is massive, and most of it is being sent to the frontline."

Luo Yuan nodded. He had noticed that the atmosphere had been unusual during the past few days. There had been cars on the streets, especially in the middle of the night, and sometimes even during the day. The smell of smoke had been getting a lot thicker lately.

Huo Dong was aware that Luo Yuan had something on his mind. He knew that Luo Yuan could not be treated as an ordinary person. His supernatural abilities made him highly sensitive to danger. He had been able to predict danger coming their way several times, and he was getting more and more accurate. Huo Dong quickly asked, "Did Lin Xiaoji come to see you? He's in the frontline, so he should know more."

"No." Luo Yuan shook his head. Ever since Lin Xiaoji had left, he had never returned. Luo Yuan was not sure if the frontline was that strict, or if he just didn't want to.

"You should go back now. If you hear anything, please let me know as soon as you can so we can get ready."

"Sure! I'll notify you first, Boss Luo." Huo Dong stood up and left, looking worried.

After he left, Luo Yuan started walking in circles. He trained for a little while, and not long later, Huang Jiahui woke up. Noticing the package on the table, she asked, "Who is this from?"

"Huo Dong brought it. It should be meat," Luo Yuan said.

Huang Jiahui opened the package. There were around 40 catties of meat inside and a big bottle of liquor weighing about 10 catties. There was also a glass jar with something big soaked inside it. The jar weighed 10 catties and what was inside it weighed around three catties. Huang Jiahui took a closer look, and her face went red in shock. "That shameless pig! Why would he give you this?"

Luo Yuan glanced at it and realized it was the penis of a mutated beast. He was speechless. Considering his physique, he definitely did not need that.

"Don't you dare drink this!" Huang Jiahui warned him while still blushing. His abilities were already terrifying enough. She could not imagine how strong he'd get if he were to drink that.

"Then throw it away!" Luo Yuan did not know what else to say.

"No, it would be a waste to throw it away. We should give it to someone else." Huang Jiahui was a thrifty person, so she could not bring herself to throw it away.

"It's up to you. Oh, there's something going on in the area. Be

careful. Try to stay put at the police station, and I will come pick you up," Luo Yuan said in all seriousness.

"What's wrong?" Huang Jiahui asked worriedly.

"I'm not sure myself," Luo Yuan said solemnly. "Just be careful."

Huang Jiahui knew that Luo Yuan was serious, so she nodded. "You be careful, too. I'll go prepare breakfast now."

Luo Yuan remained quiet as he watched Huang Jiahui get busy in the kitchen. After going through so many ups and downs, he realized that the peaceful life they were leading now was not easy. Unfortunately, they could only take what they could during the apocalypse.

After breakfast, Huang Jiahui went to work. Luo Yuan knocked on Wang Shishi's door. "Are you still not up?"

"Don't bother me! Let me sleep a little more!" Wang Shishi said lazily.

"This girl is getting lazier every day! I'm heading out, don't forget your breakfast!" Luo Yuan said. He would definitely have taught her a lesson if this had happened before, but he could not bother right now.

She was not entirely lazy, though. She was practicing her Telekinesis non-stop every day, and she had even taken Luo Yuan's

suggestion and been using Telekinesis in her daily chores. She would fly whenever she could, and she would use her powers to move things without her hands. Telekinesis had almost merged with her instinct.

Now she could use it to move things that weighed up to 60 kilos. She could still not make Luo Yuan float in the air, though. The uncertainty of her Telekinesis affected her performance big time. For instance, she could make his body lift up in the air with just a wave, but if there were something sharp coming his way, it could lead to unimaginable casualties. Telekinesis was a powerful ability though, and even Luo Yuan was jealous of her.

Luo Yuan closed the door and walked towards the outskirts of the city. There were a few guards by the gate, but they looked scared as they bowed down before him. Luo Yuan glanced at them. They were the same guards who had denied them entrance when they'd first arrived at the city. Their attitude had changed greatly since then. They were full of respect and excitement whenever they saw him now.

After filling in the necessary forms, Luo Yuan walked out of the city, feeling everybody's eyes on him. At that time of the day, not many people would go out of the city, but most of the people who did were looking for adventure in the wilderness. A young man holding a sword, who was about to leave the city, asked a guard, "Boss Liu, who is this man? I've never seen him before."

The guard stared at him. He thought maybe it would be a good idea to let others know who Mr. Luo was so they would not offend him. "Did you hear the rumor about the man who handled the

crypt worm invasion? That's him. He is a super evolved person."

Gasps sounded everywhere. Most people were stunned, but they looked delighted.

"That's him? Is he living among us now? That's wonderful! I heard that he killed all the crypt worms by himself!" One of them said.

"More than that! A soldier friend of mine told me that the crypt worm was killed while he was still trying to get a good look at it!" Someone else said in excitement.

"If we'd known, we would have said hi to him," another person said regretfully.

"That's right. Even if he doesn't care about us, it would still be cool to meet him. He's a legend!"

Nothing could be hidden under the sun, and the crypt worm invasion had been huge, so there had been no chance of sweeping it under the rug. Everyone was talking about it, and that mysterious man and his powerful abilities had become everyone's favorite topic.

Luo Yuan's hearing was sharp. Although he had walked far away, he could still hear what people were saying about him. He smiled, realizing that he enjoyed being admired.

## Chapter 263: Gobi Desert

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Along the way, Luo Yuan saw groups of people gathered together every now and then, walking off into the wild.

This place was the border of the Reconstruction Area. Although regular search had been conducted to remove any potential dangers, there was always fish that escaped the net.

To a certain extent, these people worked to keep the threats at bay. Therefore, in the Reconstruction Area people were allowed to be free and do as they pleased, although that was neither encouraged nor prohibited.

Luo Yuan walked alone, but along the way many people approached him and asked him to team up. Luo Yuan smiled and refused politely.

These people were ordinary people, and most of them only hunted for smaller, low-level mutated beasts to improve their lives. Naturally, this kind of thing was beneath him, but he had not gone there to hunt anyway.

After walking five to six kilometers away, the number of people gradually became smaller. Luo Yuan walked in long strides, his speed became faster.

That place had originally been a desert, but the air did not seem to be arid. Sparse yellowed leaves covered the soft sand, exuding the slight smell of a chemical. Luo Yuan knew they had been



recently sprayed with herbicide.

Still, he noticed that buds had begun to sprout from the ground, the dewdrops on top of them fluttering slightly as they faced the morning sun and extended their soft foliage. Mankind and nature were bound to have a long-lasting war.

In the distance, a heap of dead insects was gathered on a small hill near a lighthouse. Not all of them were dead, though. Some of their blackened bodies were still struggling, crawling around as if trying to distance themselves from the charnel ground that extended a few kilometers around the area.

Heavy boots stomped heavily on the insects, making their colorful fluids burst out of their bodies. Luo Yuan furrowed his brows in disgust as he walked away.

Suddenly, a gunshot was heard from afar. It sounded like it had been more than one gun.

"You fucking coward, you have the guts to become a deserter? Put the guns down and follow me back to the base! Follow me before the Disciplinary Committee finds out!" An angry voice could be heard shouting from a distance.

"Let me go, I still have children! Just pretend that you haven't seen me! Please, I'm begging you!" A distressed, trembling voice answered.

"You know how they treat deserters, you will be executed immediately! Stop being so stubborn and come with me! I will act like nothing happened!" The first man was getting increasingly furious, but then he said earnestly, "You know, these days none of the deserters survive. Unless you want to become a meal for the wild beasts, there is no place for you to escape to!"

"Sir, I know you mean well, and that you have been taking care of me. But if I go to war, my death will be pointless. I'd rather flee. You should all flee too. The Desert City will not hold this time. Why would you want to die in vain?" The other man countered.

After hearing that, Luo Yuan's heart gave a thud and his face darkened. How could the situation have gotten so serious that even the garrison would not be able to deal with it? How could this be, when their defense was so strong and their fortress so sturdy? Even cannons could not easily destroy it.

The atmosphere had suddenly gotten quiet. After a while, the man trying to persuade the deserter said loudly, "What kind of nonsense is that? I have no idea what you're talking about. Where did you get this news?"

"You don't need to know that. It just did, without even meaning to. The swarm of insects will soon spread to this place. Even if you don't believe it, you should have guessed it. There has been an increase in ammunition and fuel supply in the warehouse recently. War will break out very soon, so listen to me and let us flee from this place!"

"It's not like we have not experienced an insect plague before.

When has it ever broken our defense? Stop that nonsense, and just answer my question. Will you follow me back to the camp or not?" The squad leader growled quietly in a deadly tone, trying to suppress his anger.

"What if it's a super plague?" the man tried to persuade him, noticing the squad leader's unyielding will.

"Is this your decision?" The squad leader said in a low growl. "Stop this nonsense, and stop giving excuses, it's useless! Either you go back with me, or you die!"

They both went silent. Suddenly, after a long moment, a gunshot rang out.

Luo Yuan heard the distant gunshot, even though he was deep in thought. Anxiety flashed across his eyes. Was what the deserter had said true?

If there was really an insect plague, it would be terrible. That kind of plague was the worst kind of beast plague. Not only did the insects move at great speed, but because most of them could fly, they were difficult to defend oneself against. Once they were near the defense line, the Desert City would be inevitably surrounded. If it was a super plague, then it would be a nightmare.

Luo Yuan's heart gleamed with frustration as he gradually quickened his pace.

When he passed by the defense area, he observed his surroundings carefully. There were many transport trucks occasionally coming and going on the road, stirring up sandy dust. Even the few cannon barrels on the fort were given a few test runs. Perhaps it was his mind playing tricks on him, but the whole defense area gave off a tense vibe.

Luo Yuan stopped observing and headed to the checkpoint. After he showed his pass, he walked out of the line-of-defense and turned in the direction of a valley located tens of kilometers away.

Although people called it a valley, it was, in fact, the Gobi Desert and it comprised of dozens of huge stones.

All the stones were hundreds of meters tall. From a distance, they looked like a series of mountain peaks. After the dawn of the apocalypse, large numbers of plants had started growing rapidly on them. Their original color was invisible from afar, and exuberant green hues could be seen instead.

Both the giant lizard and King Kong had been placed in that area. Huge dangerous beasts like them could not be kept inside the safety region, so the Gobi Desert had become the beasts' territory.

Luo Yuan took out a cell phone and switched on the satellite tracking system. Two green dots seemed to be around the area.

Before the two beasts had been placed there, microchips had been implanted into their bodies so that they could be tracked.

Luo Yuan had been given the cell phone after the implantation of the chips. Compared to the popular high-end cell phones before the apocalypse, this one was significantly heavier and slower. Its touch-screen function had been removed and replaced by an old-fashioned keypad, similar to the Nokia phones of seven or eight years earlier. The collapse of global trade, as well as the fall of most industrial areas, had slowed down and even reversed technological advancement.

Luo Yuan looked in the distance and let out a sigh of relief. The two beasts were not too far away.

It was actually his first time in the area after they had been moved there.

His heart could not help but beat fast. This place was far away from the line-of-defense, so he could finally let go and run.

A strong wind blew against his face. The ability of his clothes to balance and alter the wind currents turned the wind into a gentle breeze. It was the first time he was running to his heart's content ever since he had set foot in the Reconstruction Area. Unlike the villa's courtyard, there were no obstacles there.

As his speed became faster and faster, his surroundings disappeared behind him swiftly.

These days, his body was still transforming. The large amount of food he consumed had increased his Strength beyond the 15-point mark.

Every time he placed his foot on the ground, it was as if the ground caved in and a small pit was formed. The strong force had improved his speed, so now he was simply running at lightning speed. His body felt as if it was floating, and every step he took felt like he was striding eight to nine meters forward. To maintain his balance and prevent himself from being swept away by the wind, he had to lower his body.

In a matter of seconds, he had reached the Gobi Desert.

## Chapter 264: Lightning Youth

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Meanwhile, in a cave not far away from where Luo Yuan was, a group of people congregated in excitement.

"Chief, through my observation from the sidelines all this time, and the hundreds of inquiries I have made, I have managed to gather information about the current situation. It seems that there is going to be an insect plague very soon." The man speaking was in a military uniform, and he was addressing another young man, his eyes filled with a trace of fanaticism.

The man that he had addressed as chief had a childlike face. Judging by his appearance, he could not be over 20. He had to be 16 or 17 at the most. Facing the thirty-something military officer, the teenager showed indifference and a hint of arrogance.

"If what you say is true, then this is our chance!" Said the man faintly, patting the shoulder of the other man. "You did well. You can leave first, but do not act rashly. We need to avoid being found."

The teenager was dressed shabbily. His clothes were full of holes, and he did not look much better than a homeless man. However, his skin was silky smooth and white, and his hair was sleek and glossy. His eyes were as black as ink, his irises almost covering the white of his eyes. His appearance gave off an air of mystery; he was dressed in dirty, tattered clothes, yet he had a distinctive elegance about him.

The major did not say much. He just nodded, turned around and left the cave.

"Sister Mo, how is he? Are there any signs of escaping?" the teenager suddenly said after a while, his tone more gentle.

"No, it is not that easy to break from my hypnosis. I could tell him to commit suicide, and he would gladly do it," said a demure, soft-spoken young woman in a gentle tone. Her words made everyone in the cave shiver.

There was nothing magical about hypnosis. Any ordinary person could master some of its tricks if they trained enough. However, even though normal hypnosis could make someone obey a certain order, it could not make the hypnotized person commit suicide. That was because such a thing would clash with their subconscious, resulting in a failure of the hypnosis.

The teenager did not seem surprised, though. He actually looked amused as he said, "I certainly do not doubt your abilities, Sister Mo. It's just that the critical time is getting closer now, and we must be more cautious."

"Is this necessary, [Xiao Yu](#)?" said the young woman named Sister Mo, looking at the teenager in confusion.

Xiao Yu (小羽) - Similar to a 小宇 in Chapter 62 that was translated as Little Yu which also reads as xiao3 yu3 in its pinyin form. The translation in this chapter is also has the same pronunciation, but is a different person.



"You're thinking conservatively, Sister Mo!" The teenager shook his head and turned around. When he raised his head again, there was an arrogant expression on his face. "This is the apocalypse! The previous era is about to end soon. Hereafter, only the strongest will rule. The world is destined to be ruled by the evolved. Times will change. I am only adapting to those changes, but I must have the Desert City."

"Even if you take it, you will be unable to defend it," said the young woman worriedly.

"I do not need to defend it. I only need to govern it by law. Regardless of who is the superior, with my ability and your hypnosis, there will be nothing that we cannot do." The teenager gave her a cold smile. "As long as we can reach that stage, we can slowly plan the rest!"

"There is nothing to worry about, sister-in-law. The Desert City is just a small town without any decent evolved humans around. There won't be any danger. As long as you can control some of the leaders, we will have the final say. You just don't fully trust our boss' capabilities yet," a man said laughingly. He had a yellow skin tone, and his body was heavily built.

As she heard how the man had addressed her, the young woman's face went red. She gave the teenager a displeased look and looked down silently.

The brilliant color on the young woman's face sent the teen's heart aflutter. If there hadn't been people around, he would have carried her to the inner room and fervently taken her.

Although he'd had sexual relations with dozens of women since the beginning of the apocalypse, he had forgotten most of them easily. However, his feelings for Sister Mo were special. When he'd been in junior high, Sister Mo had been his language teacher and his secret crush.

At the time, he had been antisocial, thin, and insecure. He had been a wallflower in class, and had belonged to a group of ignored and bullied students. Only the beautiful, gentle language teacher had cared about him, so she had always been the object of his desire in his youthful fantasies.

That tender, beautiful body, those moist lips and that gentle demeanor used to appear often in his dreams. If the end of the world had not come though, this incestuous relationship might not have come to light, and he would have only occasionally dreamed of being intimate with her.

However, those that were gifted were destined to shine. Just like ugly caterpillars transformed into butterflies and soared in the skies, so did he. Even before there was any sign of the impending apocalypse, he had already developed his superpowers.

His special abilities were inherent, different from the people who had obtained theirs through the consumption of mutated beasts. One day, he had discovered an electrical current on his hands, and from that moment on, everything in his small world had suddenly changed.

He had hidden his power from his parents while he had secretly absorbed electrical power and stored it. His body had undergone extreme changes, and he had rapidly grown tall and strong as his strength had grown day by day.

He had gradually become more and more confident. Girls that had been uninterested in him before had started to shower him with attention, and the b\*stards that had tormented him before no longer dared to be mean to him.

As the apocalypse had been approaching, the city had become more dangerous and violent. His parents were killed by burglars due to his negligence. Three days after he'd buried them, he had finally tracked down their murderer.

He had made his first kill while also rescuing two women that had been threatened by the murderer. He had also experienced his first pleasure between a man and a woman that night. After they had been rescued, the victims had gotten into bed with him and pleased him in every way, letting him savor all that pleasure in delight.

He had matured in a single night. As the city had grown more chaotic and dangerous, he had been like a fish in a pond. With his strong powers, very few mutated beasts could beat him. Through both coercion and willingness, the number of his conquests increased, from the school beauty to white-collar women, heiresses, and mistresses of the rich and powerful...

Even his language teacher had not been able to escape his grasp.

Still, all good things eventually come to an end. Soon, the military had come, and the city had regained its law and order. Nonetheless, he had continued to act recklessly, not wanting to give up his old ways. He had been forcefully repressed by the newly-arrived military, and had been forced to enlist in the army. Soon after, most of the women had left him, one after the other. Only a small number of them had remained, but his teacher had been one of them.

These events had been followed by the large-scale migration, and life in the army had really depressed him. He could not stand the strict lifestyle of a soldier or the remarks made by weak, ordinary humans on his natural superpowers.

Most evolved people like him even though the relationship between normal soldiers and evolved people had been hostile. Finally, the big purge had come. Several of the most arrogant and wildest evolved people had been captured one by one, and those who had resisted had been executed on the spot.

Only a few of them had been able to escape, but he had been one of them.

He'd been a stage-four evolved person, so when he had been surrounded, he had burned the entire army squad with a sudden strike of lightning. Before any back-up managed to arrive, he had broken into the Desert City with a horse and a gun to pick up his women.

...

"Someday, I will get my revenge. I will rule the entire Reconstruction Area," the teenager thought to himself.

"After I was struck by lightning during that catastrophic electromagnetic storm, my abilities have undergone some kind of mysterious transformation. I have no idea what the level of my powers even is. I have already long surpassed level four. I could be level five, six, or maybe even seven."

"I have also long abandoned the uncontrollable release of electrical charge."

"In my eyes, this is an electromagnetic world. There are countless magnetic fields blending into the array of an invisible network, and I control all electromagnetic energy," he thought furtively.

"I could fly with the help of the earth's magnetic field, and I could easily disturb the air, which has an abundance of electromagnetic particles, to trigger a lightning storm. Under the guidance of others, I have mastered creating electromagnetic bombs."

"I could even feel the radio waves in the air that transfer messages, except that I don't know how the transmission is encrypted, so I'm unable to decrypt the information. My body has also undergone some kind of transformation. My thoughts have become sharper, and things that I was unable to figure out before have become clearer now. My muscles have also become stronger,

and my skin is firmer and smoother. My cravings for food have become less, so it seems like my development is inclined towards a non-human path."

He took a look at his palm, which seemed to have a faint electrical pulse flowing through it, "I have become invincible. If it wasn't for the nuclear bombs, the entire Reconstruction Area would not even be worth mentioning."

"Nonetheless, we've almost reached our goal. The control of the Desert City is only the first step!"

"All those who have betrayed me and the women who have left me, everyone will regret it one day!"

...

"Boss, two mutated beasts have been roaming near our place lately. Should we go deal with them?" a young man in glasses said calmly, interrupting his reverie.

"Do not act rashly during this time. We don't want to arouse any suspicion. These two are no ordinary mutated beasts. They're battle beasts implanted with microchips. If we killed them, they would expose our location. Although we are not afraid of that happening, it would be very troublesome to deal with it," said the young man lightly. He had mastered the electromagnetic waves, so he could naturally feel the beasts' bodies transmitting radio waves.

"Boss, someone is here!" Someone suddenly came in with eyes that had an unusual amber color which looked somewhat transparent.

"Who would come here?" The young man gave a faint smile, mockingly dismissing his words by saying, "The King of Fire or the God of the Beasts? I have to say, these titles are ridiculous!"

Everyone burst into raucous laughter.

"They're merely a group of villagers, acting self-righteous with the little superpowers that they have. If it wasn't for our modest boss, they'd not even be able to show-off!"

"This is not one of them. He looks unfamiliar, and his clothes don't look dirty," said the guy with the amber eyes. His superpower was long-range vision. His pupils could expand and contract at will like a camera lens adjusting its focus. He could even spot a tiny pebble located ten kilometers away, seeing its pattern clearly and in detail.

One could easily distinguish between the homeless and the non-homeless just by looking at their attire. The homeless usually wore shabby clothes or beasts' pelts. People dressed in clean, tidy clothes were rare in that area.

"I think that he is from the Desert City. I would have never thought that there would someone brave enough to venture into the wild. I'm very intrigued. Let's go and have a look," the young man said with a trace of a playful smile.

"This person is bad luck," everyone thought after seeing the young man's expression.

The group followed the young man, filing out. The intruder was still a good five to six kilometers away. From such a long distance, the others could not see him, but the young man had noticed him at first glance.

He looked on condescendingly with a nonchalant smile on his face.

Suddenly, the man turned around and looked straight in their direction. His eyes seemed to penetrate the air and imprint on the teenager's mind.

Not a single emotion could be detected on his calm gaze. He looked like a person walking down the road, occasionally looking over their shoulder indifferently. The young man went stiff, and took another look. The man had already turned back and started walking away.

"He has the guts to ignore me!" A hint of color flashed across his face. As his emotions surged, a faint lightning could be seen nearby, producing a popping sound.

He knew that his anger was uncalled for. Maybe the other man had not even known that someone had been watching him. There was no point in continuing to observe him if he could not see them. After all, the distance was too long. Even his vision was



slightly blurred. The man's eyes had made a strong impression on him, though. He could not help but smile. "No wonder he dared to go out in the wilderness. His response was quite sharp."

The bespectacled man, who was closely observing their leader, noticed the young man's fast change of emotion. He adjusted his glasses and said, "We're going through the most critical period of time, and all of a sudden this guy shows up near our turf. Could he perhaps be a spy for the Desert City? Should we capture him?"

Before the young man could reply, the young woman stared at the bespectacled man with an unhappy expression, and told the young man, "The man was just passing by, he did not attack us. You should not do anything to him, Xiao Yu."

The young man turned around, his eyes burning with passion. He really liked it when his teacher was being authoritative. He associated with the fiery hot, plump body under her clothes, and the very thought excited him.

With a loud gasp, he picked up the young woman. As she struggled to free herself, he strode into the cave. His earlier annoyance had long been forgotten.

"Teacher Mo..." the young man's voice echoed from within the cave.

The few men left looked at one another with a strange expression on their faces.

# Chapter 265: Feather

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People could see because objects reflected light into their retinas, and their retinas transmitted the signal to their brain via their nerves. Therefore, mere observing did not transmit any energy, but it was different if there was emotion or Will involved.

Having felt the enmity just now, Luo Yuan had turned around on purpose.

"I didn't know that there were wanderers here, too!" He thought to himself. He looked in the distance before he immediately shifted his focus.

He had been used to such enmity in the wild, so he did not mind it at all. Each time a stranger entered the area of those wanderers, they would be extremely vigilant and they would guard themselves against them. This had become their natural instinct.

Luo Yuan briskly walked forward, feeling an indistinct urge as he sensed the faint breathing of both the giant lizard and King Kong.

However, their breathing seemed to have changed and become more oppressive and obscure than it used to be. This made Luo Yuan surprised and dubious.

After walking for a few kilometers in twists and turns, a valley finally appeared before him. Compared to the abundant sunshine and the sparse plants of the Gobi Desert, the valley was like a totally different world. Its inner part had an abundance of plants,

and it was dimly lit. A small, two-meter-wide river flowed through it, refreshing the air with humidity.

Various bizarre flowers, plants, and weird trees with old rattans gave the valley a sense of vitality. It was really difficult to believe that this place was so close to the Reconstruction Area, which was located in the heart of the desert.

When he got there, the traces of the giant lizard and King Kong became particularly obvious. Lots of giant footprints could be seen on the ground, but the footprints of the lizard seemed to be one size bigger.

Luo Yuan stopped to look at the giant footprint carefully. Its diameter was almost one meter, which surprised him.

The footprints of the giant lizard had always been huge, but not as huge as this. They had used to be about half a meter in diameter, which had already been terrifically huge. It was about the same size as the pillars in the lobbies of some luxurious hotels. The new footprints were one meter in diameter, which might have been rare even during the Cretaceous Period, the era of the dinosaurs.

Luo Yuan's expression changed. The only explanation was that the giant lizard had evolved.

He suddenly patted his own head as he realized how easy it was to check on the giant lizard's status. He pulled up the Attribute Table. He had been living in peace lately and had stayed away from fighting, so he had not taken much notice of the lizard. He only

remembered it when he needed to use it.

It was exactly as he had expected.

"Battle Beast: Dragon Lizard"

"Level: Level 3 (Light Green)"

"Attributes"

"Strength: 21"

"Dexterity: 16"

"Physique: 19"

"Intelligence: 7"

"Sensory Perception: 6"

"Will: 12"

"Experience: 1,620/9,600"

"Skills: Biting: 12, Tearing: 13, Striking: 11, Tail Strike: 15, Survival: 18, Observance: 8, Breathing: 15"

"Natural Abilities: Sense of Danger, Fire Breath, Speedy Recovery"

"Status: Elite"

"Loyalty: 72 (Risk of betrayal if less than 50, Full Value: 100)"

"Unassigned Attribute Points: 0"

"Unassigned Skill Points: 0"

He had not expected that after not seeing the giant lizard for so long, it would have quietly leveled up to light green level and changed its name.

Luo Yuan frowned. He didn't know whether he should be surprised or happy. Its Strength, Physique and Sensory Perception had been enhanced slightly, but what surprised him the most was its Intelligence, which had risen to 7 points, increasing by 3 points in total.

Was it a mutated beast trend to become stronger and cleverer as they evolved? Luo Yuan suddenly realized that he could no longer use the phrase "wild beast" to describe high-level mutated beasts.

The giant lizard had originally been just a lizard, which according to the evolution theory was just a low-level reptile. However, its

Intelligence level had definitely surpassed mammal Intelligence, with the exception of humans.

Nevertheless, this low-rank creature had had its Intelligence level increased to 7 points when it had leveled up to light green level, so it was now comparable to a three to four-year-old child. The changes in higher-rank mammals had to be even more astonishing.

Suddenly, the ground started vibrating slightly, followed by a loud howl similar to a car horn coming from afar. The howl caused the air particles to vibrate.

"Coming!"

A breath that Luo Yuan was familiar with was heading towards him.

The valley was suddenly in turmoil. There was movement in the shrubs and tussocks as numerous mutated beasts ran in all directions as if a catastrophe was coming and they needed to save their lives.

There were a couple of cracking branches and collapsing trees, and a giant pathway about three to four meters wide was formed amidst the dense forest. Suddenly, an enormous, ferocious beast appeared.

It was an extremely large lizard. Its body was completely covered in green scales, shiny and glossy, as if it was wearing a layer of

emerald green gems. Its huge skull seemed to have no flesh at all. Other than a layer of dark grey skin, it consisted solely of an exoskeleton, which made it look like a ferocious monster.

The giant lizard was about 10 meters tall and 15 meters long. If a human stood in front of it and raised their hand, they would not even reach its knee.

Still, its hill-like body was neither corpulent nor redundant. It looked like detailed art. Even its ferocious skull had a unique beauty about it, which could linger in one's brain after seeing it.

When the giant lizard saw Luo Yuan, its expression changed and it suddenly increased its speed, causing a strong wind and an oppressive aura to blow against his face. Its heavy, 10-ton body caused a strong quake with each step it took, producing a strong vibration in the river water nearby.

If a normal man met such a creature, they would have collapsed from fear and been rooted to the ground. One would have had to have a strong Will to even be able to turn around and run. However, Luo Yuan had lots of experience with creatures like that, so he was already immune.

Nevertheless, this time was different as he felt a high pressure coming from the giant lizard that he had never felt before. He consciously held onto the handle of his sword, radiating his body force and getting ready for the worst. He scanned through the lizard's loyalty silently and exhaled in relief.

"Loyalty: 72"

"Luckily, it's still above the safety line!"

As that thought popped in his mind, the giant lizard stopped somewhere four to five meters away from him. It did not make any other movement, showing its extraordinary lightness, which was disproportionate to its size. Luo Yuan was surprised to see it. Such behavior was way beyond his imagination.

He was in a furtive alert when he saw a head the size of a small round table lower and intimately touch his chest, crying joyously.

Luo Yuan was relieved. Meanwhile, he felt a coldness on his back and he unconsciously broke out in cold sweat. He could not help but admit that the giant lizard was stressing him greatly. To a certain extent, it was no longer green rank.

This was because the attributes of the giant lizard had completely restrained Luo Yuan.

Why was Luo Yuan so strong? His terrific weapon skills, Will and Physique were some of the reasons, but the main reason was his Dexterity.

It was a very special attribute, whose each level up was very impressive. In other words, Luo Yuan thought that all level ups of other attributes were actually maximizing his Dexterity.



This was because Dexterity allowed him to enter the dimension of time.

A second for others was 7.5 seconds for him, so the world seemed slower through his eyes. That was certainly not because the world had actually gotten slower. He was the one who had entered a different time dimension.

In a meaningless second, a human could perhaps have an idea, but that idea would not have a complete form. However, a second for some bacteria could be their whole life, starting from division, preying, growth, and ending in maturity and reproduction.

If bacteria could think, that second would be their whole colorful life. It was another depiction of a time dimension.

However, the Dexterity of the giant lizard was stronger than Luo Yuan's, as it had reached 16-points now. Before, Luo Yuan had still been able to suppress it, because its Dexterity had been only one point higher than his, and the lizard could not maximize it because of its low Intelligence.

Even though it had a Dexterity of 16-points, it could only utilize about 13-points. It was better if it moved in a straight line because it could rampage through anything. However, if it had to move within a small range, it could not react due to its low memory capacity.

Its low Intelligence made it appear weaker than a normal mutated beast and far from Luo Yuan's performance, who could

kill a green rank giant beast with only 15-points of Dexterity.

However, with its Intelligence leveled up, it seemed to have acquired a new processing system that made up for its weakness. As a result, its Strength had suddenly become stronger. Luo Yuan could not even imagine how strong it was. Nevertheless, it was unbeatable by a light green level mutated beast.

...

King Kong came next. The two giant beasts lived together, but King Kong seemed to have been suppressed by the giant lizard completely. It was fearfully hiding in a corner. It dared not go near the giant lizard and it kept looking pitifully at Luo Yuan.

What left Luo Yuan speechless was how King Kong's loyalty had increased after not seeing him for about twenty days. It was even higher than the giant lizard's, reaching 82 points.

Luo Yuan tried to connect with the giant lizard to remove any feelings of alienation. He was a pragmatist, so he knew that he could no longer use his previous indifferent attitude towards the lizard considering its high value. He had to be gentle with it instead.

He stayed in the valley for a few hours and observed the territory with the giant lizard. He could sense that the lizard was very excited. It acted like a kid who had gotten a good grade and could not wait to show their parents.

His heart was moved and he paid the lizard several compliments. Immediately, its loyalty increased by two points.

The giant lizard did not understand the language of humans, but Luo Yuan's long-term lessons involving blood and tears had made it understand some specific commands as well as the mood of its master. It had learned under pressure, so it had developed the ability of observance. If its master pulled the corners of his mouth up, it meant that it was doing something right. On the other hand, if its master remained expressionless or his face darkened, it meant that it was doing something wrong. In that case, the best way to protect itself was by laying down on the ground and whimpering.

When the sky became dark, Luo Yuan turned and left under the unwilling eyes of the giant lizard and the sad eyes of King Kong.

...

He headed back at an inconsistent speed, so it was already later than 11 p.m. when he got back to the Desert City.

Even though the city gate was closed, the guards knew Luo Yuan and had a special record for when he went out, so they opened the gate after talking with their superior.

The Desert City was mostly deserted and quiet, like a ghost city. There were only two times during the day when one could experience the noisiness of a city.

One was before 8 a.m. and the other was the time Luo Yuan got back.

It was a peak hour and people went back home from work. Workers in uniforms could be seen everywhere on the streets.

Some peddlers also took this opportunity to sell various things by the roadside in an effort to improve their lives. Most of them were still wearing their uniforms, obviously having just gotten off from work. The stalls only had a few items. Other than various foods such as meat, vegetables, and snacks, there were some handmade goods, too.

The materials were taken from the area, and most of them were made from wood, but there were also some bones, skin and fur.

Among the products were various types of handmade leather purses, daggers made from mutated beast claws, as well as some handmade benches, wooden pails, bowls, chopsticks, etc. It was too dazzling to look through everything.

The whole street was filled with the sounds of people bawling about, bargaining and arguing.

The atmosphere seemed to make people feel like this was not the apocalypse, but a noisy farmers' market.

"Thirty grain coupons? This is too expensive, you're robbing people! If I didn't think that this feather was beautiful, I wouldn't

even pay one buck for it!"

"Take it or leave it, it's up to you, but it's definitely worth its price. It's a trophy I got in a battle. Half of us died and all we got were these few feathers. I won't sell it for anything less," a depressing voice responded.

"So you got injured and retired from the army? I'm sorry for what I said, but it really is not worth that price. After all, it can only be used as decoration. You'll only get one cent if you sell it to the skin and fur recycling station. I'll buy it for five bucks. Honestly, I don't think anybody would pay a higher price than that," the person who was speaking said in a nicer, more gentle tone when they realized that the peddler was an injured, retired soldier.

"Thirty bucks! I risked my life for it, I won't sell it any cheaper," the peddler replied. No flicker of emotion could be heard in his voice, though.

Curious, Luo Yuan walked over.

The peddler was a burly, middle-aged man with a prosthetic limb in place of his left leg. His face was emotionless, and he pursed his mouth. He seemed too stubborn to change his mind, even though the buyer was trying to negotiate with him.

Luo Yuan shifted his focus to the feather on the stall.

He was surprised by what he saw. The feather was about two meters long and approaching a terrific three meters. He had seen feathers longer than this, but those had been tail or wing feathers. This was merely a normal feather. Judging by its shape, it was probably from the stomach or the back of the bird, which were usually three to four times smaller than wing feathers. Luo Yuan could imagine that the owner of this feather had been an enormous creature.

Other than the supporting hard black tube in the middle, the feather appeared to be light green and very pure. Under the dim streetlights, it was radiating light. One could even see a weak radiance being emitted from it if they had sharp eyes. It was definitely something special. If this had been prior to the apocalypse, the price of this feather would have been sky-high because of its high ornamental value. Now though, even though it attracted lots of attention, very few people were interested in buying it.

The buyer refused to quit. He tried to bargain a few more times, but the peddler did not want to reduce his price at all, so he eventually had to give up.

The peddler loved the feather so much that he was obsessed with it. The feather was heteromorphic, so it had to originate from a rare high-rank mutated beast. However, its price was too high to be worth it. After all, 30 grain coupons could provide an adult with sufficient food for a month. Even though the man was a professional technician, it was still a huge sum of money, so he had to consider it.

When he gave up and turned away, a voice suddenly came from behind him and made him stop.

"Can I see it?"

"Help yourself!" the retired soldier said.

Luo Yuan reached for the feather and delightedly performed the identification technique on it.

When the previous buyer saw Luo Yuan pick up the feather and hold it as if it was nothing, he was slightly shocked. Others might not have noticed, but when he'd picked it up just now, he'd had to use all his strength as the feather weighed more than 100 catties.

"How much?" Luo Yuan asked as he put the feather down gently, without even gasping for breath.

"Thirty yuan!"

"I want it, but you have to come get the money from my house. I don't have enough on me right now," Luo Yuan said. He hardly ever carried money with him as he barely had any places to spend it.

The retired soldier took a glance at Luo Yuan and hesitated. He would have agreed if Luo Yuan had been a normal person. As an old soldier who had fought against death though, he still had enough strength and nerve, even though he had lost a leg, so he

could protect himself from any attack. However, Luo Yuan was not a normal person. He could pick up that feather easily, so this meant that he was very powerful.

As laws and regulations were strict during the apocalypse, very few crimes occurred. He was not that worried, so he nodded after a short silence.

"Wait, wait! I'm sorry to ask, but what are you buying this feather for?" the previous buyer asked. He was reluctant to see something he loved get bought by someone else at a higher price.

"Decoration, don't you think it's beautiful?" Luo Yuan answered.

The previous buyer nodded mechanically. When he recovered, the two men had already walked away, and all he could see was the radiance emitted from the feather moving with the movement of the man's arm. It produced a fading, yet beautiful light effect. The man felt disappointed.

...

After Luo Yuan had paid the peddler, he had gently taken the feather to his bedroom. It was dark, but the light in his room was not on.

The radiance emitted from the feather was the only source of light.



Luo Yuan discovered that its light was not reflected. It was actually emitted from the feather itself. Luo Yuan knew that this had to be caused by a certain power, and such treasure was definitely not meant for decoration. Using it like that would be a waste of the resources of nature. Plus, this precious material was something that could only be found by accident. With such a high-level material, his clothes could finally be leveled up again.

# Chapter 266: Composite Plasma Field

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Although it had been almost a month of peace, the mental pain from the after effects had not completely subsided yet.

Huang Jiahui's sleep was interrupted by Luo Yuan, who had just walked into their bedroom. She opened her tired eyes and quickly checked the time on her phone. It was almost midnight. Huang Jiahui refrained from complaining. "Why are you back this late? Dinner is on the table, I will warm it up for you," she said as she hustled to get out of bed.

"There's no need for dinner now. Please go back to sleep. We have to wake up early tomorrow," Luo Yuan said.

"You interrupted my sleep. I can't fall asleep right now." Huang Jia Hui sat up at the corner of the bed, revealing the smooth, soft skin of her shoulder. Wearing just her undergarments, she stood up and pulled out a long jacket. Suddenly, she noticed a shining object on the corner of the wall and said, "How beautiful! What is this thing you brought back?"

"It's a rare mutated bird's feather. Wasn't I lucky to pick it up from a street stall?" Luo Yuan laughed. It had indeed been a lucky day for him. He had just been passing by the street like he normally would when he'd spotted the rare green rank mutated beast feather.

Come to think of it, it couldn't be that hard to get a green rank mutated creature feather from someone serving in the army.

Provided that they could kill such a creature, they could easily take something from it to keep as a souvenir.

However, that kind of material was only valuable for research or scientific-based organizations. Commoners did not find them useful. This feather would be a luxurious accessory to a civilian, but to Luo Yuan, it was a precious, rare material for synthesis, whose value could not be measured.

Perhaps he should walk around the market more often so he would not miss out on anything good.

"What level does this feather belong to?" Huang Jiahui asked when she saw how happy Luo Yuan was. She knew Luo Yuan had a special skill that could distinguish the level of anything.

"Six, I think!" Luo Yuan replied.

Huang Jiahui was shocked by his answer. She now understood why Luo Yuan looked so happy about this. Although she had gone through many adventures with him, she had never seen a green level creature yet, only some flesh and blood. The best she had seen had been the Archelon egg.

Curious, she walked over to touch the feather. She was amazed by its pale green color, similar to a precious stone, which emitted a mesmerizing radiance. It felt really tender and smooth to touch.

She was captured by the quality of the feather. Such quality could

only be found in myths, where creatures had perfect feathers. Suddenly, she remembered that she had been about to warm up the food. "I have bought some vegetables. They're slightly old, but they don't taste bad. I used the remaining jerky for the soup. I need to heat it up though, it must have gone cold."

"Take it easy, you know I have good teeth. It's not hard for me to chew cold jerky," Luo Yuan said, feeling moved.

Soon, the noise in the kitchen had woken up Wang Shishi, who had been half-asleep. Thinking of Luo Yuan, she ran out of her bedroom, wearing just a singlet-like pajama.

Her pajama was very thin and short. It did not cover much of her thighs, revealing her undergarments. Her chest was moving up and down like a rabbit's as she ran out, showing the cream tone of her skin. Her youthful energy almost made her breasts pop out.

She stormed forward like a rabbit, wrapping herself tightly around Luo Yuan's arm as she asked pleasantly, "Brother Luo, when did you come back? Please take me along when you go out next time! I was too bored at home!"

"You're just not used to living a peaceful life, but you will get a chance in the future," Luo Yuan replied without moving away.

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After Luo Yuan finished his dinner, he told Huang Jiahui to go to

bed because she had to work the next morning. However, Wang Shishi was unemployed at the moment just like him, so when she heard that he was going to synthesize something, she asked to see.

Letting her watch, Luo Yuan moved the feather from his bedroom to the living room to avoid interrupting Huang Jiahui's sleep.

"Qingming Bird Feather"

"Rarity: Green"

"Weight: 53 kg"

"Additional Abilities: Low-Thermal Plasma Field, High-Thermal Plasma Field"

"Remarks: The Qingming Bird is the king of the sky. Except when it's reproducing, it spends its whole life living in an ionized layer, so very few people have actually seen it. Its feathers have the ability to release a strong current of a low-thermal plasma field and a high-thermal plasma field!"

"These are the two different types of ion fields!" Luo Yuan thought silently.

Even though he had read about these two types of ion fields before, he was still very astonished to see it.

He did have certain knowledge on plasma fields. A plasma field was the fourth form of mass, solid, liquid and gas being the other three, and it was divided into high-thermal plasma field and low-thermal plasma field.

High-thermal plasma field appeared in science fiction and produced high-frequency plasma. For example, the sun and all the others star in the universe contained this element. Low-thermal plasma field, on the other hand, was quite common. It could be found in television, neon lights, medical surgery and so on.

He subconsciously touched the feather, feeling amazed. Who would have thought that a single feather of only 30-40 degrees could have such a high-temperature plasma field?

Plasma temperature was normally quite high, ranging at about ten thousand degrees. Just its residual heat alone could make most creatures melt away. However, this feather did not release that kind of heat, which was kind of strange.

Observing it carefully, Luo Yuan spotted glimpses of a glow from time to time but was only able to vaguely sense its terrifyingly strong current.

After making all kinds of hypotheses, deductions, and theories, he finally reached a conclusion. There was a chance that this was a compound plasma field with a minimum of three layers. The bottom layer had to be a low-thermal plasma field, or else the Qingming Bird would not have been able to withstand the heat; the

second layer had to be a high-thermal plasma field; and the outer layer had to be another low-thermal plasma field, explaining why the feathers always maintained such a low temperature.

The three layers of plasma field were intertwined, complementing each other and forming a perfect energy system. The high-thermal plasma field had a terrifying energy that was perfectly hidden within the system. The whole system was harmonized and united, so no energy leaked out from it.

Based on Luo Yuan's knowledge as a layman, this technique exceeded the advancement of human science and technology. Such a feat would have been impossible even ten years from then.

That type of compound force field was exactly like energy shields in science fiction. Most physical attacks and energy would be either absorbed or abated by the compound force.

That's why it was warm to the touch. Perhaps it had not reached its ultimate condition yet. Once the compound force field burst, it would consume a certain amount of energy to sustain itself, no matter how sustainable it actually was. This ultimate condition could not be achieved by touching it and squeezing it.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan had a terrific idea. His forehead was dripping with sweat, and his face had turned pale.

Although the feather seemed to be harmless to humans and animals, it contained a terrifying amount of energy. Once it was synthesized and that energy was leaked, Luo Yuan would become

ten times stronger. As long as he avoided turning into ashes, of course.

Luckily, he did not do it rashly.

"Brother Luo, how are you?" Wang Shishi asked after seeing Luo Yuan's expression change.

"Fine!" Luo Yuan gave her a forced smile while he was still thinking fast.

This was not right. The energy within the feather should not be that high. After all, no matter how powerful the Qingming Bird had been, the feather was just dead material.

However, all this was just a hypothesis. He needed to conduct an actual experiment.

"Shishi, can you move away, please?" Luo Yuan asked.

"Okay!" Wang Shishi obeyed, stepping back a bit, even though she found the request strange.

When Luo Yuan saw that Wang Shishi had stepped back about four meters, he felt relieved. That distance had to be enough.

Luo picked up his Zhanmadao and took a deep breath. Immediately the Zhanmadao reflected a blazing flame. It shined



like lightning, slicing through the air in a never-ending flash.

The blade of the Zhanmadao was one with his Will as it touched the tender feather. A screeching sound was produced along with a few blue and white sparks. If Luo Yuan's eyesight had not been sharp enough, he would not have been able to see it. The next second, the feather had been cut into two.

If it was not for the blue sparks and the feather's light resistance as it was cut through, it would have been similar to a normal green rank material.

However, it was just an illusion. Only Luo Yuan could feel how terrifying the blue sparks were as he suddenly felt all his Will getting used up, like a balloon being pierced by a sharp object.

Even though it had just been a short contact, not even 0.01 seconds long, it had consumed almost 20% of his Will. It was a really scary number. If his Will had not acted as a shield, the tip of the Zhanmadao might have melted away.

It was hard to imagine, but if it had actually happened, even Luo Yuan's fingers would have melted and turned into gas.

Luo Yuan began to panic. That material was like a prickly hedgehog. Although its additional strength would be the perfect defense, the danger of the synthesizing process made him hesitant.

"Brother Luo, the light seems to have grown dimmer!" Wang

Shishi suddenly said as she kept looking at it.

Listening to her, Luo Yuan got inspired and took a careful look at it. It was indeed dimmer.

He realized that he had gone deeper into the inertial mode of his thoughts. Despite the feather's enormous energy, it would still be used up if he gave it enough time.

Luo Yuan waved his Zhanmadao again. This time the sparks were weaker, and the whole feather turned dimmer.

His face showed a flicker of happiness as he ruffled Wang Shishi's hair and laughed, "You did well this time!"

Wang Shishi was confused about what she had done. Was it what she had said?

Luo Yuan quickly sliced through the feather again, dividing it into smaller, palm-sized pieces. The first few cuts produced more sparks, but in the end, the feather died. Even its temperature had gone down. Obviously, its energy had been used up.

Luo Yuan walked into his bedroom and grabbed a jacket and an undergarment.

He owned more than one set of clothes now. He had a few more that had been given to him by the city leader or Huang Jiahui. Still, he barely wore them. He preferred his own synthetic clothes,

which made him feel more secure.

They weren't just easy to clean, but also fast to dry.

It wasn't just him. Wang Shishi and Huang Jiahui were the same as well. After going through the apocalypse, nothing was more important to them than a sense of security.

Luo Yuan's coat was a tight battle suit. Everyone in the Reconstruction Area, soldiers and average citizens alike, had a tight battle suit. The only difference was that the soldiers' battle suits were all the same color, while the civilians' came in variety of colors. Some of them were even hand-made.

Luo Yuan thought of making a night-illuminating coat, but he gave up on the idea and only synthesized the undergarment.

Such a coat would be too eye-catching, and would attract unnecessary danger, causing Luo Yuan trouble. Considering that a lot of creatures were phototaxic, wearing an illuminating garment would be like asking to die.

Plus, an undergarment could be worn under a coat. In fact, Luo was unwilling to let go of the set of clothes he had made last time. Even though they were made of a lower grade material, they had the ability to reduce wind resistance, so they could maximize his speed and further enhance his effectiveness in battle. This effect could definitely not be measured by grade.

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He had to prepare for half an hour, but the actual synthesization only took five minutes. Before Wang Shishi's amazed eyes, a light green undergarment was created.

The Qingming Bird had probably not used its feathers to enhance its self-protection, because the fabric was very soft, smooth and tensile. It did not have the hard feel of normal green level materials at all.

Instead, it had an exceptionally smooth, delicate texture, even more so than silk clothing. The whole set of undergarments had become a few kilograms heavier, but that seemed to be the only downside. Wang Shishi looked at it with shining eyes.

"You don't have to be jealous. You will get one yourself when the time comes. Now go to bed. You can give me your clothes tomorrow," Luo Yuan said as he looked at her. After making a whole set of clothes, there was still a lot of material left. It would be enough to synthesize two to three more sets of clothing.

It was already late at night and the two of them were standing alone in the dim light. It would be better to continue synthesizing the next day.

After he finished speaking, Luo Yuan picked up his clothes and walked to his bedroom, using the Identification Technique.

"Plasma Field Undergarment"

"Material: Qingming Bird Feather, Cotton."

"Rarity: Green"

"Weight: 3 kg"

"Defense: 22-25"

"Additional Abilities: Composite Plasma Force Field"

"Equipment Requirements: None"

"Remarks: This is an undergarment with a Plasma Force Field. It can defend one against most energy attacks and against a certain degree of physical attacks."

## Chapter 267: Youth

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On the big field of the Desert City Second Junior High School, the instructor was shouting as loudly as he could. Hundreds of students were waving and thrusting their bayonets, wiping off their sweat under the scorching sun. It was imposing to see all the bayonets thrusting neatly at the instructor's command.

Under the pressure of potentially losing their country and having their tribes wiped out, the Reconstruction Area during the apocalypse had made military training a main subject along with some essential cultural learning. Students, especially male ones, spent almost half a day on the field.

Their curriculum included shooting, weapon maintenance, stamina training, sharp weapon practice, and long-distance, weight-bearing running every morning. It was not any easier than the Special Forces training before the apocalypse.

By consuming high-energy food, thirteen and fourteen-year-old teenagers had already grown up and become as strong and energetic as calves. Therefore, none of them fell behind. Although the training was tough, they all gradually adapted to it.

Zhong Chuqiang was practicing absent-mindedly. He was not interested in the bayonet drill taught by the instructor, as he found it inadequate compared to Boss Luo's knife skills.

He thought that Wushu was all the same though because he had not point of reference for it. Nonetheless, even though he needed

to learn the newest version of a bayonet drill revised by a well-known martial art master with experience in brutal combat, he felt uncomfortable and unmotivated. He just could not make himself focus. In other words, he could only unleash less than 30 percent of his strength.

Still, his young age made him reticent and honest, so he followed all the instructions given to him. Actually, he just wanted to tackle his instructor so he did not have to practice the bayonet drill after class anymore. He wanted to practice Luo Yuan's knife skills even harder instead. He hoped that he could become as strong and fearless as Luo Yuan.

Used to living in such dark times as he was, he had a deeper understanding of the brutality of the world than most of his fellow students. People would be bullied by others if they were not strong enough. That did not just apply to humans, but to mutated beasts as well.

He wanted to get stronger so he could protect himself and the people close to him.

Although he was not putting his heart into it, his movements were still the best. He was even better than some of his schoolmates who had been practicing for a year. His movements were actually smoother than that of the instructor.

Suddenly, a soldier beckoned to the instructor. The instructor replied with a nod before he shouted, "Zhong Chuqiang, step out!"

"Yes, sir!" Zhong Chuqiang quickly broke team formation in a standardized trot.

"Lead the team for the last ten minutes, then dismiss everyone," the instructor ordered him as he checked the time.

"Yes, sir!" Zhong Chuqiang shouted, not surprised in the least. A similar situation had occurred enough times already. Being a teacher was merely a part-time job for the instructor. Meanwhile, he was also a garrison officer. On many occasions, he had been called out during class, and another student had acted as a substitute teacher to replace him.

Once the instructor had left, the whole team started slacking off slightly. Many of them sighed in relief. The imposing instructor might have left, but none of them had started whispering among themselves or stopped practicing completely. They had just taken a momentary rest.

The military management of the apocalypse differed from the old formalism. Other than excellent students, there were also reserve soldiers and armed workers. The schools were implementing military law, which meant that light offenders were expelled and major offenders were punished by death penalty.

After continuing the dull drill for a while, the school bell finally rang and Zhong Chuqiang dismissed the class.

Everyone cheered as they walked towards the school canteen exhaustedly, yet in a disciplined, orderly manner. Everyone was



very concerned about collective education after all.

Zhong Chuqiang was chatting with several of his close friends in a low voice. "Brother Qiang, our canteen has level four meat today," a tall friend with acne on most of his face said mysteriously.

"Level four meat? What a luxury! How do you know?" another friend interrupted in excitement.

"My aunt works in the canteen and she told me confidentially," the tall boy said. "I heard that a catty of meat powder is sold for 30 catties of food coupons outside."

Sounds of excitement were heard from many of them.

Zhong Chuqiang curled his lip, but he said nothing. He had gotten tired of eating that kind of meat while he'd been in the wild. He had eaten lots of meat, not just level four, but also level five and six. If he were to calculate its value, it must have been worth over 10,000 catties of food coupons.

"That's expensive! But we don't know for sure how much we'll get. Hopefully, we'll get a catty each!" another student said as he began to fantasize, his mouth filling with saliva.

"Consuming too much can cause a nosebleed. I think we can only get one or two tael. I heard that high-level meat is aphrodisiac. Eating it will make you burning hot and have you thinking of

women," a student wearing spectacles said softly.

"What if you're a woman?" This type of topic was undoubtedly a popular subject among young boys.

"They must think of men, too!" the fellow in the spectacles said in excitement as he looked up. Then he suddenly saw someone, and said, "Oh, Brother Qiang! That beautiful mutated girl with the greenish skin is looking for you again."

Zhong Chuqiang furrowed his brows and said, "Shut up, I've told you that she's not mutated. Nevermind, you won't understand, even if I explain."

Young girls going through puberty change every day. After being parasitized by the parasitic moss, the process seemed to have occurred even faster for Chen Jiayi. In only about a month, she had grown into a beautiful, graceful girl like a budding snow lotus. The shape of her body had also changed from a thin figure to a perfect hourglass figure.

Her light green skin looked fine and smooth, emitting a glistening radiance that looked like jade. The parasitic moss had made her body change fast, giving her a new life, but also making her become quieter.

The two of them walked aimlessly around the deserted field, not saying anything. Chen Jiayi had gotten used to the silence, but Zhong Chuqiang, who was attracted by her beauty, kept casting furtive glances at her.

He had just reached puberty himself, and a companion he used to share hardships with had suddenly become very beautiful and attractive. This had made him feel strange and enormously stressed at the same time. He no longer even dared to look into her eyes.

At last, Chen Jiayi broke the silence. She seemed to have spaced out for a while before she suddenly recovered.

"Tomorrow is our monthly day off. Are you going back?" Chen Jiayi asked softly.

"Back where? To Luo Yuan's house?" Every time he met Luo Yuan, he felt nervous and just couldn't relax. He automatically answered, "I can't. I've recently started participating in reserve duty and I may be needed for volunteer work at the army camp during our day off."

"I see. Deng Chao might go, too," Chen Jiayi said disappointedly.

When Chen Jiayi mentioned Deng Chao, Zhong Chuqiang felt a strange, uncomfortable feeling. He said nothing, though.

They seldom saw each other, as they had been too busy after starting school. Although they did not meet, Zhong Chuqiang still heard Deng Chao's name around.

It was rumored that Deng Chao had been put in confinement for

a day during the first day of school, because he had fought with his instructor.

After that incident, nobody had bullied him, and his relationship with the instructors had gotten better. He had even become good friends with them. Many army commanders wanted to meet him in person and from what people said, he had been asked to join the army. Soon after he graduated, he would be offered a position as Second Lieutenant.

Compared to how famous Deng Chao was in school, Zhong Chuqian was a nobody. Very few people knew about his talents.

"Has anyone bullied you recently?" Zhong Chuqian changed the topic. He did not want to talk about Deng Chao.

"No," Chen Jiayi said sadly. Ever since she had been parasitized by the moss, her body had been enhanced tremendously. She had become even stronger than Deng Chao and Zhong Chuqiang, so nobody dared bully her.

In fact, nobody even wanted to talk to her. They all treated her like a monster. Everyone kept a distance from her, even though they knew her. She could still vividly remember the moment the moss had parasitized her body and the panic in everyone's eyes. Only Brother Luo had trusted her and not cared about her skin or the moss underneath it.

Zhong Chuqiang did not know how to lighten the mood. They no longer had anything to talk about.

"If there's anyone bullying you, you can tell me. I'll help you," he said clumsily after a while.

"Okay," Chen Jiayi answered absent-mindedly. After some thought, she said, "Lately, I've been feeling like I can't catch my breath."

"Are you sick?" Zhong asked worriedly, taking a quick look at her light green skin.

"I'm not sick, I'm just not feeling right. I thought I should let you know," Chen Jiayi said, her face turning grave as she looked at him.

## Chapter 268: Jealousy

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The next morning, after Huang Jiahui had left, Wang Shishi came out of her room shyly and walked into Luo Yuan's room, holding her underwear in her hand as her heart beat fast. She came out of the room immediately, looking unhappy.

The colorful underwear exuded a girlish fragrance, and there was still a slight warmth to it if one touched it. Obviously, it had just been taken off her body.

"This girl!"

Perhaps it was because of her parents' good genes, or maybe because she was an evolved human, but Wang Shishi was getting prettier and prettier as she grew up. She was just like a fairy who had walked out of a picture. From an appearance perspective, Huang Jiahui and Zhao Yali were ordinary beauties. Though they could not be found everywhere, women like them could often be seen walking down bustling streets before the end of the world. Wang Shishi's appearance, on the other hand, could make people feel amazing, or intimidate them.

It was definitely a big challenge for Luo Yuan to have such an enchanting woman flirt with him, giving him all sorts of hints. He had a body far beyond that of an ordinary person's and exuberant flesh comparable to that of a mutated beast. As a result, he experienced desire ten times stronger than the average man did.

His secular eyes and moral taboos had gradually been weakening

in his heart over time, but he still managed to maintain an ascetic self-restraint. He had to put a lot of energy in exercising intensely, otherwise, he would have made Wang Shishi his wife a long time ago.

Luo Yuan quickly pushed the thought away and synthesized the rest of the material into the underwear.

After the synthesis was completed, there were still some leftover Qingming feathers. Luo Yuan kept them for Zhao Yali, planning to make a trip to her place in the evening.

The newly synthesized clothes appeared to be cyan in color, without any fluorescence, but this was the magic of this equipment. It seemed to be able to absorb the ions surrounding it in order to recharge, and also be able to absorb the current directly.

This was the result after Luo Yuan had tested it for the whole night. The underwear on his body now exuded a bright fluorescence, even brighter than the original feathers', and occasionally produced a faint light. The equipment was extremely stable now; there was no energy dissipation phenomenon.

Luo Yuan believed that the feather must have been damaged, resulting in a certain energy dissipation, but the synthesization seemed to have fixed everything.

To be honest, he was a bit scared to wear it on his body. After all, it contained high-temperature plasma. If it was damaged, his flesh

would be too fragile under such a high temperature. If that kind of defense was broken, his life would come to an end.

Ordinary bullets could not break the green level defense, only armor-penetrating bullets or high-level mutated beasts could pose a threat to it.

In fact, excluding any psychological factors, although it looked scary on his body, there was only a minimal danger of breakage. When he'd cut the feathers, he'd seen that the plasma field inside had not been completely in order. There were several single units that could generate energy independently, so even if it was damaged, the excitation of energy would not be fatal. Worst case scenario, it would leave a few holes through high-temperature ablation.

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Luo Yuan looked at the time. It was almost 5 o'clock, so he immediately left home.

Today was everyone's monthly day off, so since he had nothing to do, he decided to go to the school to take a look. After all, he was the guardian of three children.

This was the first time he would be visiting the boarding military school. Usually, no one could enter the premises other than the staff. Even the street opposite the school was deserted.



However, that day was clearly different. Before he had reached the school, Luo Yuan could already see that the front of the school gate was swarming with parents. There was an exciting atmosphere all around, and joyful laughter could be heard. The brutal end of the world might have changed people's attitude towards life, but family love would never change.

Luo Yuan looked at the happy scene and smiled warmly.

He glanced around the crowd, but he did not find the people he wanted to pick up. There was a trace of disappointment on his face. He was not surprised, though. All along the way, he had played a serious role in the team. Even Commander Xia had sometimes trembled before him. Perhaps in the children's hearts, he had seemed stricter and scary than their teachers.

A young woman in the crowd was secretly looking at Luo Yuan. She seemed surprised and a bit uncertain. She stared at him for a little longer, feeling a small sense of familiarity. The man seemed to have sensed the stranger's gaze, and he looked in her direction.

"Wu Xiaoxiao!" Luo Yuan called out in surprise.

"And you are?" Wu Xiaoxiao's face felt a bit warm. This man had said her name, but she did not know who he was. Embarrassed, she said quickly, "You look familiar, but I can't recall your name."

"I'm Luo Yuan, we went to high school together! Have you forgotten about me already?" Luo Yuan smiled in surprise. It was not easy to meet a former classmate during the end of the world.

"Luo Yuan! Really? You have changed so much! This is really... unbelievable." Wu Xiaoxiao's face flashed a little in surprise. She looked at him carefully again. There was something vaguely familiar about his facial features, but other than that, he looked almost like a different person.

She could not relate the memory of that shy classmate to this man that stood out among the crowd, exuding a brilliant light.

"I did not expect to see you again!" exclaimed Luo Yuan.

Wu Xiaoxiao used to sit in front of him in high school. He had even had a crush on her. She had been a goddess in his heart, but he would blush every time he talked to her. Now everything had changed, though. He no longer had a crush on her.

"Yes, it's really amazing! When did you get here?" Wu Xiaoxiao said incoherently. She sounded really excited.

"Not long ago. How about you?" Luo Yuan smiled.

"No wonder I haven't seen you before," Wu Xiaoxiao said with a laugh. "I have been teaching here ever since I graduated from school. I stayed here to work. I was very fortunate."

"You really were. So you're a teacher here?" said Luo Yuan, gradually calming down from the excitement of meeting a friend in that foreign land.

"Yes. Do your children go here?" Wu Xiaoxiao asked as she looked at Luo Yuan. Her eyes were sparkling with a crystal light.

Even since she had met Luo Yuan, Wu Xiaoxiao had felt an intense throbbing that made her heart beat rapidly. Her face was blushing.

After obtaining the system, Luo Yuan had not just improved in terms of physical strength. Even his appearance had changed and become more handsome. The transformation had deeply changed the genes in his body, making him attractive to the opposite sex.

From a reproduction perspective, an instinctive desire to inherit good genes was generated from a woman's body. This gave Luo Yuan a big headache every time he went out as people kept turning to look at him.

"Yes, my adopted children," Luo Yuan answered reluctantly.

"True. Even if you had a kid, they wouldn't be this old," Wu Xiaoxiao laughed at her own foolish question.

Perhaps she was too excited, but Wu Xiaoxiao simply could not stop talking. Luo Yuan had nowhere to be, so he did not stop her rambling.

"Xiaoxiao, is this a colleague of yours?" a voice interrupted their conversation.

The speaker was a middle-aged man with a briefcase and a pair of thick, black-rimmed glasses. There was a smile on his face, but Luo Yuan noticed that it was somewhat reluctant.

Wu Xiaoxiao felt uneasy. She blamed herself for the thought she had had just now. She touched her hair to cover her uneasiness and said, "This is Luo Yuan, a high school classmate of mine. I did not expect to meet him here, so we just conversed for a while. This is my husband, Sun Youde. He's working at the Institute! "

"Hello, there!"

"Hello!"

The two of them shook hands quickly.

Sun Youde felt threatened by this new man. He was so handsome that even he himself felt a little dazzled. Plus, he had clearly seen his wife staring at his face without blinking just now. That damn b\*itch!

Sun Youde was considered average-looking, maybe even ugly. He had a low self-esteem, but lots of pride. Before the end of the world, he had been just a research assistant with a pitiful monthly salary. He'd had no house or car, and he had been single for over thirty years.

During the end of the world, the shortage of scientific research

personnel had allowed him to enter the Reconstruction Area, where he had been promoted to laboratory director and met Wu Xiaoxiao. According to the common policy, the two of them had gone on a blind date and gotten married at lightning speed. Of course, he was happy and satisfied with his beautiful wife, but because of his low self-esteem, he was also concerned about every single guy that approached her. He was especially wary of the guy who was standing in front of him right now.

The damn b\*tch!

"I didn't realize you were Xiaoxiao's classmate. May I know which unit you're working for?" Sun Youde said, his lips stretching tight as the muscles on his face tensed.

"I just came here recently, so I'm not working yet. Still waiting to get assigned!" Luo Yuan said with a smile. He could feel some hostility from the man, but that was normal. Anyone would feel unhappy if they saw their wife talking happily with another man.

"Basically, there's no ideal job. If you have no connections, you will either be recruited as a labor worker or a soldier. Being a soldier is way too dangerous, and if you do not have any technical skills, you can only be a labor worker. Both are hard, low-paying jobs. You might not be able to support a family in the future." Sun Youde tried to describe the situation as badly as possible to scare his rival, just like he had earlier.

"I have no choice. I just arrived here, so I don't know anyone. I can only wait." Luo Yuan answered, feeling funny.

"Youde, this is my high school classmate! Can't you help him out?" Apparently, Wu Xiaoxiao had not noticed the rivalry behind Sun Youde's words. She sounded a bit worried about Luo Yuan.

"Well, do you have a bachelor's degree? Anyway, it does not matter if you don't. I can still hire you to be my assistant." Sun Youde felt even more jealous when he saw Wu Xiaoxiao be so kind to his rival. Suddenly, he laughed in a kind of morbid way.

"You can recruit people independently?" Luo Yuan asked curiously after he hearing what Sun Youde had said.

"Of course not, but we're an institute, so we can recruit certain supernumeraries," said Sun Youde maliciously, slightly emphasizing the word "supernumeraries".

Unlike before the end of the world, supernumerary staff were now considered as guinea pigs. In order to survive, all ethical and moral restrictions had been waived, and all kinds of cruel human experiments were allowed.

Cloning was just the lowest degree of cruelty. There was body modification, gene implants, radiation mutation. Thousands of volunteers died at the hands of laboratory criminals every year. People outside the industry never knew anything about it.

Whether the volunteers agreed or not, by the time they reached the lab, they could not resist anymore. The volunteer program during the end of the world was not as strict as it used to be, so

anyone would easily sign the contract for the money without reading the small script.

Luo Yuan didn't realize that this man wanted to kill him just because he had talked to his wife for a while. Even if he had known, he would not have known how to react, though.

"Excuse me, let's talk about it later. The person I was waiting for is coming." Luo Yuan saw Chen Jiayi, who had just walked out of the school. He had no interest in talking to this jealous man anymore, so he beckoned to her.

"This is a rare opportunity. You may not have it again in the future," Sun Youde reminded him with fake kindness.

"This is true, Luo Yuan. People working in the Institute get good benefits!" Wu Xiaoxiao also advised him enthusiastically.

Suddenly, a shrill air raid siren sounded all over the city. Luo Yuan was shocked. He subconsciously touched his waist, only to realize that there was nothing there. He had left his sword at home.

There was a commotion in front of the school gate. Luo Yuan turned and looked at Wu Xiaoxiao and Sun Youde. Both of them looked scared and panicked.

## Chapter 269: Great Battle

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The crowd was grouped together. Those who had responded quicker were running towards the bomb shelter with their children. Most people were strong, as they had gone through many difficulties. Although they looked panicked and helpless, they were still conscious and they followed a certain order.

"Let's go to the bomb shelter! Perhaps it's just a drill?" Wu Xiaoxiao said, taking a deep breath. She was smiling reluctantly.

There had been a few alarms in the city ever since she had arrived at the rehabilitation base. Most of the time, it was only a drill, except the time when the small-scale migration had occurred. She thought that might be the same thing.

"It's definitely not a drill!" Luo Yuan said with a serious expression. He looked up to the sky instinctively and saw more than 10 tiny, cigar-like spots spurting flames as they flew past their heads.

Every once in a while, there were a few hundred fighting jets in the sky. From what they could see, there were about 500 jets this time. Not many countries had more than 100 fighting jets, except China, America, and Russia, who had the most powerful military.

"Brother Luo!" Chen Jiayi interrupted Luo Yuan's thoughts as she walked towards him.

"Let's go home!" Luo Yuan was stunned when he saw her. He was



so surprised by her beauty that he could hardly recognize her. However, he recovered from the shock very fast.

Chen Jiayi nodded. She trusted Luo Yuan completely. He could sell her to someone else, and she would not say a word.

"Luo Yuan, stop fooling around!" Wu Xiaoxiao said. She thought Luo Yuan planned to pack his luggage and leave when she saw him insist on going back.

She went on to say, "There's a lot of food and resources in the bomb shelter. It's more than enough to sustain everyone in the city for half a year!"

"There's someone waiting for me at home. We have to go," Luo Yuan said sincerely. He was touched to see Wu Xiaoxiao so panicked and mad.

"Are you insane? They will go to the bomb shelter by themselves! You can look for them later!" Wu Xiaoxiao said anxiously as she saw the crowd dispersing on the street.

"I can't take that risk!" Luo Yuan said. He had gone through a lot of hardships with his friends on their way there from the coastal area. He knew all of them had been relying on him, especially the women. They would probably keep waiting for him if he did not return.

Sun Youde had been waiting for a while before he said, "We will

leave first then, see you at the shelter!"

Luo Yuan nodded and pulled Chen Jiayi along, getting ready to leave.

"Wait! It seems like it's not that dangerous yet. Let's go together!" Wu Xiaoxiao said quickly before she added, "At least that way there will be one more person to help!"

Sun Youde looked upset. He was not smiling anymore, but nobody had noticed it.

"Alright, but everyone needs to be quick!" Luo Yuan nodded, realizing he had made an impression on his old schoolmate.

"Great!" Wu Xiaoxiao said quickly.

Luo Yuan did not say anything else. He just pulled Chen Jiayi along and began to run slowly. The school was only about three kilometers away from where they lived. The distance was short enough for Luo Yuan, who was physically strong, and Chen Jiayi, who was parasitized by moss. It was really easy for them, even though they ran at normal speed.

However, it was overwhelming for Wu Xiaoxiao and Sun Youde, who were just ordinary people that lacked any training. They were already gasping and sweating half-way along the journey.

"Luo Yuan, how long more to go?" Wu Xiaoxiao asked, gasping.

She looked very pale as she kept running.

"We'll be there soon! It's not far!" Luo Yuan turned around and took a glance at her. Wu Xiaoxiao seemed to be unable to continue. After pondering it, he asked, "Do you want me to help you?"

Wu Xiaoxiao hesitated and turned to Sun Youde. Sun Youde shrugged as he saw her look at him. Smiling, he said, "It's fine. He's so strong, he's not even sweating!"

Luo Yuan smiled, but he remained silent. He released Chen Jiayi's hand and took Wu Xiaoxiao's before he started running again. Wu Xiaoxiao's name reflected her size. She was only 160 cm and 45 kg, which was almost the same as Chen Jiayi. It did not require a lot of strength for Luo Yuan to help her.

Wu Xiaoxiao had not realized her schoolmate was so strong until he pulled her hand and ran. He was really strong, and his breathing remained unchanged. Even though he had to pull her along, he had no trouble maintaining his speed. His skin was shiny and smooth, and his palm was soft, yet strong. Wu Xiaoxiao's heart was beating very fast as she smelled his masculine fragrance. Her face suddenly turned red, and she began to feel dizzy.

Sun Youde gasped and felt his legs go numb. He felt upset as he watched the three of them, who were really far ahead. He was mad because Wu Xiaoxiao would not even look back to check on him along the way.

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The four of them had finally arrived at the villa. Gasping, Sun Youde sat on the couch straightaway, his face looking very pale. He was surprised that Luo Yuan was staying in such a luxurious district. Even he could not have afforded to live there.

Actually, he might not have been able to, even if he'd had the money. Real estate properties were not allowed to be traded anymore, so houses were not for sale, even if one had the money. People would be allocated a house once they entered the rehabilitation base. Those who stayed in the luxurious district were usually assistant professors of senior researchers or government officials.

There was no specific way to categorize people in the rehabilitation base, but it was still pretty obvious that they were labeled, even though no one talked openly about it. People were judged based on their allocated house and the benefits they were granted.

"Who is this guy?"

Sun Youde looked upset, but at the same time he felt lucky that he had not offended Luo Yuan.

Suddenly, a door opened and two women came out of a room. Stunned, Sun Youde stared at them. The elder one did not look special, but her figure was amazing. It was seductive enough to make anyone feel hot.

The younger one, on the other hand, looked as beautiful as a piece of artwork. Every single part of her was perfect, making it difficult for Sun Youde to resist looking at her.

The young beauty glared at him though, and he quickly turned his gaze away. He was jealous, because he knew the woman belonged to Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan looked at them. They were both in their modified suits.

"Have you called Zhao Yali?" he asked.

Huang Jiahui stared at him for a second before she said, "I called her earlier when the defense alarm was still ringing. She should be here soon. Wang Xiaguang said she's not coming, though."

Luo Yuan sighed, but he was not surprised. Wang Xiaguang was a tough person, and she had been trying to avoid Luo Yuan ever since she had discovered the truth. Now that they were back in the rehabilitation base, she obviously did not want to have any more contact with him. Everyone made their own choices in life.

Huang Jiahui secretly observed Wu Xiaoxiao before she smiled and said, "You haven't introduced us."

"This is my high school friend, Wu Xiaoxiao, and this is her husband, Sun Youde. We bumped into each other earlier. This is my girlfriend, Huang Jiahui, and this is Wang Shishi," Luo Yuan introduced them briefly.

They all talked to each other courteously except for Wang Shishi. She remained silent, unhappy with the way Luo Yuan had introduced her.

They rested for a while until Mu Wenwen finally got there, gasping fast. Still, she looked better than last time. She had more facial expressions now. Apparently, she'd been having a good time lately.

Everyone was chitchatting, but their hearts were not in it. As time passed, the ground began to shake a little. Luo Yuan lost his patience and just started walking around the house. The rest of them slowly stopped talking. Wu Xiaoxiao did not dare say a word, even though she had wanted to talk earlier.

After five more minutes of waiting, Zhao Yali finally arrived.

"You're late," Luo Yuan said.

"I got caught up with one of my colleagues, it was hard to escape," Zhao Yali said uncomfortably.

As a beautiful woman, she was never short of admirers. Her superior was being very annoying because he knew Zhao Yali was single. She was a polite woman herself, so she did not like rejecting people. Besides, that man was her superior. It was really difficult for her to reject him firmly, as he used teaching her new things about work as an excuse. Luckily, she had made an excuse about needing to go to the washroom, else he would have followed her

there.

Perhaps Luo Yuan could help her in the future so her superior would not disturb her again.

"Be careful next time. Let's go!" Luo Yuan did not say anything else. He just took the Zhanmadao and walked straight towards the bomb shelter of the district.

There were not many people walking on the street after such a long time. Most of them had already escaped to the bomb shelter. They arrived there soon. The entrance was only half open now, and a group of soldiers was guarding the door.

"Hurry up! The shelter is closing in three minutes!" a soldier shouted at them angrily when he saw Luo Yuan and his friends.

# Chapter 270: Magnetic Field Reversal

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Luo Yuan lowered his body and went through the thick metal door. Underneath the door was a typical basement staircase, and on both sides of it there was light. It was as bright as daylight.

After crossing five levels about 20 meters deep, they entered a long, three-meter wide channel. Every twenty meters, there was a soldier on duty. It was a pretty tense atmosphere, and everyone could feel the pressure.

Luo Yuan knocked on the wall of the channel with his weapon's handle. Using his Sensory Perception, he discovered that the wall was more than a meter thick. That kind of thickness could withstand even a cannon bombardment.

Luo Yuan was relieved. Against such defense, even a green level mutated beast would need to put some effort to break in. He continued to walk for another minute, passing by three thick metal doors, each about 50 centimeters thick. The noise got gradually louder as the team reached the hall.

The entire 10,000 square meters of the hall were full of people. Some of them were sitting, and others were standing, but all of them looked anxious and afraid.

A two-year-old child was crying hard, and a woman kept trying to comfort it. Next to her, a man who seemed to be her husband was rummaging around for a bottle, but coming up with nothing. It seemed like he had forgotten to bring the bottle, and he looked



frustrated.

A lonely, widowed old man was sitting in the corner, groaning and sighing, sadness flashing across his wrinkled face.

There were also several strong young men discussing what would happen next. Their faces looked excited and high-spirited. There were all kinds of different people with different feelings and expressions in the hall.

Luo Yuan glanced at the crowd and carefully looked around the rough, concrete walls. There were big motivational slogans posted everywhere. There were several channels near the lobby, so he guessed this was not the only hall.

He took a deep breath. Compared to the dugout before the end of the world, the defense now was clearly more powerful and more sensibly designed. The placement of each survivor hall was relatively independent, so even if one of the halls was destroyed, they could ensure the safety of the other halls by closing the metal door at the entrance of the channel.

"We have to find a place to sit!" Wu Xiaoxiao said as her restless heart calmed down.

Luo Yuan nodded. Apparently, there was no room arrangement under the current circumstances. He found a space randomly and sat down right on the floor. Huang Jiahui and the rest also sat down naturally.

They were already used to surviving in the wild. Usually, they would care about cleanliness, but in that tense atmosphere, they knew it was more important to be at their best state at any time.

However, Wu Xiaoxiao and Sun Youde were still not used to it. Wu Xiaoxiao hesitated for a while, but she also sat down eventually. Sun Youde looked at the thick dust. It looked like the hall had not been cleaned in a long time. He could not stand it. Frowning in hesitation, he did not sit down but chose to squat instead.

Luo Yuan took a glance at Sun Youde, who was squatting as if he was ready to stand up anytime. It might have been safer than sitting down, but it was a bad choice. When one squatted for a long time, it could lead to poor blood circulation and numbness in their feet. When one's knees were bent in a curve, it was difficult for their muscles to get relief, and when they eventually stood up, they had to move at a slower speed. If they had been outside confronting some kind of danger, such a delay could have proved fatal.

However, this was a shelter with a strong defense, so he did not expect to face any danger. Therefore, he did not advise Sun Youde not to squat.

To be honest, the man had made a bad impression on him. It was normal for someone to be hostile when they met a love rival. Luo Yuan would have done the same himself.

However, this man was clearly different from others. His hostility was abnormal and had a trace of deep malice to it.

That instinct was based on Luo Yuan's intuition, which had been trained through experiencing numerous dangers. It was almost impossible for normal people to hide anything from him. People could be trained to hide their true feelings, but no matter how perfect the mask they wore was, they could never fool their own hearts.

Anyway, Luo Yuan did not care much about it.

"Where is Cao Lin? Have you seen her?" he asked Huang Jiahui in surprise as he glanced around the crowd.

Wu Xiaoxiao looked a little curious when she heard another woman's name. All along the way, while she had followed Luo Yuan and his gang, she had thought that her high school classmate had seemed very mysterious. These women did not seem like ordinary people. They carried weapons with them, and their temperament was different than the average person. Their actions were efficient, and she did not know why, but she felt intimidated by them.

Although they sat separately, Luo Yuan was still sitting in the center. A few of them sat very close to each other. So close, that she would not believe them if they said they did not have a relationship. She thought he already had enough women, so she had not expected to hear another woman's name.

"I thought you had forgotten about her." Huang Jiahui smiled as she looked at Luo Yuan. "Cao Lin and Huo Dong have been

together for some time. He's a deputy director of the guarding troops now, so he's arranged a safe place for his woman."

Luo Yuan did not respond to Huang Jiahui's playful expression. He had not done anything wrong, so he had nothing to be scared of. "I never knew!" he said curiously. "Huo Dong never mentioned it."

Yet now he recalled how cautiously Huo Dong had acted in front of him, and how many times Cao Lin had given him hints when they had been outside the city. It must have been a common secret among the team, but Luo Yuan understood why Huo Dong had been afraid of his reaction if he discovered the truth.

He shook his head silently. Cao Lin was very pretty and smart, but she had a complicated mindset. That kind of people could thrive under any circumstances, but she was definitely not his type.

"According to Huo Dong, there are spare rooms. He can arrange one for us," Huang Jiahui continued. When she saw Luo Yuan look unfazed, she could not help but be secretly relieved. She had really wanted to see Luo Yuan's reaction, so she had purposely teased him in that naughty tone.

Cao Lin and Huo Dong were a match made by her. If Luo Yuan found out, he might be displeased. He might even resent her and want to stay away from her. If that happened, she really did not know what she would do.

She was not as strong as she looked. She was the weaker one in the relationship, and she had to put up with the existence of Zhao Yali and Wang Shishi so that she did not seem unnecessary.

...

New Beijing was the redevelopment capital.

It was a new city built in about a year and a half. It was not the country's largest city, but it was the center of politics and economics. Its large number of factories and research institutions accounted for almost two-thirds of the city.

The chimneys were as dense as a forest, exuding a horrible smokey smell toward the sky day and night. The rich mist was like a layer of soft tulle, shrouded in every corner of the city. Even under the sunlight, the city looked dim and misty.

Xinhua Road had been a common road name before the end of the world, but it had a significant meaning in this new city.

If New Beijing was the hub of the country, then that street was the heart of the hub. Almost all central departments were stationed there, so it was tightly guarded. There were guard posts located all along the street, and a dozen armored vehicles were patrolling it back and forth. In addition, about a kilometer away were the most elite troops in New Beijing, coupled with an intensive automated air defense network. Even a mutated fly would not be able to fly over that network.

In the center of the road, there was an inconspicuous small building that was even more closely guarded. If "Wartime Commission" had not been written in red solemn characters on a plaque, no one would have ever known that this was currently the country's biggest center of power.

Those past few days though, the atmosphere there had become very grave.

It had all started a month ago when a researcher at the Institute of Geology had noticed a strange occurrence. He had discovered that the magnetometer had shifted eight degrees from the Earth's magnetic field and that the magnetic field had also weakened by 12%.

If this had happened before the end of the world, it would have been sensational news, but now, when human lives were at stake, such a thing was naturally ignored.

Shifts in a magnetic field occurred often and always changed. The moving plates of the earth caused volcanic eruptions, massive nuclear explosions, and rising sea levels, and could lead to changes in the poles. There had been several times in the earth's history when a magnetic field reversal phenomenon had occurred. This time though, it was a slightly bigger change.

Since the end of the world, researchers had been trained not to pay too much attention to detail, so the man had not kept those changes in mind. He had just written down the results in a notebook and put it aside.

After ten days though, as the subjects he studied had been idle and his thinking had been clogged, he saw the magnetometer in the laboratory and recalled his measurement a few days earlier. In a sudden impulse, he tested it again, and the results made him pale.

The magnetometer had shifted 17 degrees, and the magnetic field had weakened by 21%.

In just ten days, it had shifted by nine degrees. This was the first time this had happened in human history, so he became a little nervous. At first, he had thought that he had measured it inaccurately last time. He went back home and suffered from insomnia the whole night. The next day, when he measured again, it was 18 degrees. He realized the seriousness of the situation, and he immediately reported it to the institution. The institution reported it right away to the center, and soon the issue had attracted everyone's attention.

After several days and nights of research, a more detailed report was presented on the conference table of the Wartime Commission. The results made everyone feel hopeless. All the data showed that the earth's magnetic field was about to reverse and rewind at a fast speed. There was no time for them to react or respond in any way.

The consequences of a magnetic field reversal would be devastating. Once the magnetic field was reversed, the first consequence would be that the magnetic field would start weakening. Taking into account that it was the Earth's shield, once

the magnetic field disappeared temporarily, an intense solar wind would blow towards the Earth, and once the ozone layer burst, UV light would no longer be blocked.

However, what was even more serious, was that the cosmic storm caused by the burst of the supernova had not been stopped yet. It had just been wandering around the solar system, so if there was no protective magnetic field, it could lead to more dire consequences.

Before any of this had happened though, a massive migration of mutated beasts caused by magnetic field disturbances had been creating a red alert in the Reconstruction Area.

Insects and birds were undoubtedly more sensitive to the change of the magnetic field than humans. In fact, when the report was submitted, the satellite had already captured the movement of mutated beasts around the globe.

A large number of insects and birds had been moving insanely in large groups. Even the smallest group was several square kilometers big, and the biggest ones looked hundreds or even thousands of square kilometers wide on the satellite picture. Their density almost formed a huge shadow on the picture.

The Reconstruction Area was unfortunately on the path of a large influx of insects.

Prior to this, several bombs, including a hydrogen bomb, had been used to attack those insects in an attempt to intercept them



and change their path. However, the results had been dissatisfying. Although the bombs had killed most of the insects, the influx of insects had diffused and become broader, reaching tens of thousands of square kilometers.

As a result, the center had decided to stop the nuclear attacks. They were not worried about the nuclear winter brought by the excessive launches of nuclear bombs. In fact, over the past year, there had been more than three thousand nuclear launches globally. On average, ten bombs were detonated almost every day. Some scientists claimed that, radiation cloud aside, nuclear winter would curb global warming, which would actually be a positive impact.

However, the world had not turned colder, and a radiation cloud had not appeared either. The radiation was perfectly absorbed by the massive plants, which were thousands of times more than what the Earth used to have before the end of the world, causing even more mutation.

They stopped the nuclear attacks simply because it would be a waste to attack at this point. After all, nuclear bombs did not grow on trees, and China was not like the United States or Russia, who owned more than ten thousand nuclear bombs.

There were only a few hundred bombs in China's total reserves. Its big territory and a large number of nuclear launches during the earlier part of the end of the world had consumed almost all the country's inventory.

Of course, with their current level of productivity, bomb-making

would not be too difficult. If they used their full force, they could make up to a few hundred bombs a year. However, due to the scarcity of uranium and its electricity demand, nuclear bomb production was very limited, so their bomb inventory was always empty.

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Tens of thousands of square kilometers of insects could easily destroy half the Reconstruction Area. Civilization would be hit again and all their effort to rebuild everything would go to waste. More than a dozen army teams with millions of soldiers, who had been put on standby a few days ago, went forward into battle, heading from three different directions.

The war was starting.

# Chapter 271: The Next Level

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"The food is here!"

"I'm so hungry!"

A group of men dressed in a chef's clothes were pushing dozens of five-meter tall, huge barrels into the hall. The crowd suddenly became restless. However, in the Reconstruction Area, everyone had to be disciplined. Even starving people had to restrain their desire and queue up patiently.

Of course, the heavily-armed soldiers in the hall may also have played a role in that. Luo Yuan stood up and got in line along with the rest of the crowd. There were thousands of people in the hall and dozens of casks. Half an hour had passed before Luo Yuan and the gang received their food.

Dinner was only two big pies per person, but they weighed around one pound in total. The pies were green in color, and they obviously did not look like they were made of flour.

"This is a cactus pie. I bet you've never heard of it before," Zhao Yali teased Luo Yuan when she noticed his hesitant expression.

Luo Yuan smiled unnaturally before he asked curiously, "Cactus pies are made of cactus?"

Indeed, he had never eaten this before. He looked down and bit

into the pie, chewing slowly. He found that it tasted very rough when he swallowed it. It scratched his throat as if it was stinging.

"It's called a cactus pie, so of course it's made of cactus. We used to eat this very often in the factory. Steamed, cooked, fried... We had this thing every day for every meal," Mu Wenwen explained when she saw Luo Yuan's distressed look.

After she had entered the Reconstruction Area, its disciplined environment and peaceful life had made her insecurities diminish greatly. She was a lot more cheerful than she used to be, and she could talk to everyone now. She was a completely different person compared to the time they had spent in the wild.

"In fact, what we have been eating is also cactus starch," Huang Jiahui explained embarrassedly, "but it's finer than this."

"There is a difference of seven to eight times in price though," Wu Xiaoxiao muttered quietly, trying to hide her shock.

Regular cactus starch was not pure. There was still a small amount of fiber in it that had not been processed properly. Although that amount was very little, cactus fiber was a few times harder than bamboo fiber. Even if it was ground into powder, it was still very hard to swallow. However, it was cheap in large quantities and was very filling, so it had become the main dish in the Reconstruction Area.

Super fine starch, on the other hand, required more than a dozen procedures. By removing the coarse fiber, its taste became almost

the same as that of ordinary starch. Of course, it cost as much as three pieces of mutated beast meat. Wu Xiaoxiao's husband had a decent income, but they were still reluctant to buy fine starch. Ordinary workers could simply not afford it, so she had never expected anyone to actually use it as a main dish.

Huang Jiahui blushed. Luo Yuan had gotten used to eating wild meat for every meal when they'd survived in the wild, and he still did while they were there. His three meals a day had to include meat and vegetables, but his recent appetite had been too big, so for almost every meal he ate five or six days' worth of meals. A thousand dollars was considered a large sum of money for the average person, but he'd almost spent that much within a month.

"Just be honest, Luo Yuan. What is your occupation?" Wu Xiaoxiao finally asked. She was really curious about it.

"I've told you, I'm temporarily unemployed," Luo Yuan replied helplessly as he ate quickly, swallowing his last bite. He took some water from Huang Jiahui and drank it.

The women secretly laughed.

"I don't believe you, but it's alright if you don't want to tell," Wu Xiaoxiao said angrily, her mouth twitching. The women's laughter made her even more suspicious.

"I'm telling the truth!" Luo Yuan said.

Suddenly, Secretary Zheng entered the hall and looked around. His unique vision helped him spot Luo Yuan and his gang. He was surprised to see Luo Yuan exuding boundless glory. He looked like the sun. When he went closer, he felt as if his soul was burning. Apparently, his strength had improved since the last time they had met.

He quickly calmed down and greeted him with a warm smile, "Hi, Mr. Luo! You're here! No wonder I couldn't find you anywhere else. Mayor Wu has prepared a room for you all. Would you like to go there now?"

Luo Yuan was stunned for a moment before he smiled and stood up. "Hello, Secretary Zheng. Would it be too much trouble for you?"

"It's our pleasure to invite you, it's no trouble at all!" Secretary Zheng said quickly, his heart fluttering as he shook Luo Yuan's hand. Although he was in politics now, he was still an evolved human, so he was more fascinated with strength and power than the average person.

"There's a lot of us here. Are you sure you can arrange it?" Luo Yuan asked embarrassedly.

"Seven of you? Of course, no problem!" Secretary Zheng said immediately as he glanced at the group.

To be honest, he was kind of frightened to be talking to such a strong man. The gap between them was too huge, and he felt that

he might lose his life if he said anything wrong.

Wu Xiaoxiao and Sun Youde were shocked by Secretary Zheng's flustered look. Who was Luo Yuan to get such special treatment from the mayor?

"Since you have invited us so kindly, let us go to the room," Luo Yuan said.

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He discovered that there was another level below the shelter.

"This level is mainly a warehouse. It stores a large number of goods, such as food, water, ammunition, fuel, and so on, plus a spare factory. This way, even if the shelter is completely closed, we can survive for up to a year," said Secretary Zheng.

Noticing that everyone looked confused, he quickly added, "Of course, the ammunition depots are far from the residential areas. Don't worry, we have adequate isolation facilities, so even if there's an explosion, we will not be affected."

Everyone was relieved by his explanation. No one would want to sleep next to an ammunition depot that could easily cost them their lives.

"Secretary Zheng, do you know what happened outside?" Zhao Yali suddenly asked.

Luo Yuan was curious about it, too. It seemed like it was a very big issue this time. Desert City could possibly have been destroyed.

The question made Secretary Zheng halt. He hesitated for a long time before he whispered, "It's a secret. You can't spread it out. We do not want to cause panic among the population."

Everyone quickly nodded their heads.

"We have received a message from Top Management that a huge insect influx will pass through here. A few days ago, the war began at the frontline, but it hasn't been going well. Once the frontline falls, Desert City may be temporarily evacuated."

Luo Yuan's expression was serious. "In other words, we will stay here for a long time."

"It is possible, but if the situation becomes even worse, we might need to retreat to the next city," Secretary Zheng said, "After all, Desert City's population is nearly a million people. There are a lot of machines and equipment, and if they're not maintained properly, they will rust very soon. Top Management certainly does not want to waste resources."

Although productivity in the Reconstruction Area had recovered, it still could not be compared to the time before the end of the world. Some equipment could not even be produced anymore, so it had to be salvaged from the occupied zone that had huge human and material resources. With the passage of time, most of the



equipment in the occupied zone had already gotten damaged though, so they could not search around for materials and equipment like before. Every loss of equipment counted now.

"But there is only one double-track train in the underground with just two trucks. How could so many people and equipment be transported out in such a short time?" said Sun Youde with a pale face. Living through the Great Migration had made him sensitive and deeply aware that during critical times, the priority would always be the equipment, talent, women, and children.

During the Great Migration, many people had been brutally abandoned. The rebels had been shot to death by machine guns, and there had also been countless people who had died on the way, some of them getting eaten by mutated beasts. All these cruel scenes had been giving him nightmares.

Even though the Reconstruction Area was relatively safe those days, during critical times there was always prioritization. His identity had been different back then, and his degree of importance had been good enough for him to be included in the first migration. Sun Youde had suddenly come to a lot of realizations.

Secretary Zheng stared at him in dissatisfaction as he said, "This is just my guess. It depends on the specific circumstances of the changing situation and the decisions from the top management. Even if the situation deteriorated dramatically though, at least the shelter would still be safe. If it's impossible for everyone to migrate, the rest of the people could still survive for up to a year with the supplies here. Such a long time would be sufficient to

rebuild the area and regain the lost ground."

Everyone relaxed. No matter how bad the situation was, at least it would be safe for them to stay there.

They continued to walk for a few minutes before they stopped in front of a warehouse. Secretary Zheng opened the door to a three to four square meter room. "This was an office area originally, but it was too big, so most of it has been turned into dormitories. Mr. Luo, you will live here. Hot water and meals will be sent soon. If there is anything you need, you can come find me. I am in room 2033. You can also go directly to Mayor Wu. We are in the same room."

"We have..." Wu Xiaoxiao was about to say that they'd already eaten, but she was held back by Huang Jiahui. Suddenly, she understood, and quickly shut her mouth.

Huang Jiahui knew that, considering Luo Yuan's big appetite, the cactus pies he had eaten earlier would not have been enough. She had actually planned on giving him her own pies, but if there was going to be a meal delivered, she would definitely not be giving them away.

Once Secretary Zheng left, the team walked into the room. It was arranged like a student dormitory. There was a small space with eight beds, enough to accommodate everyone. There was also a bathroom inside.

The room was simple, but in this narrow, overcrowded shelter,

they could not ask for much more.

"Huo Dong said he would arrange a room for us. How come you still followed Secretary Zheng to this room?" Huang Jiahui whispered, pulling Luo Yuan to the side.

"It's not easy to get a room in this shelter, and he has just arrived, so he should not have that much power. I guess it's the military behind him who will arrange for it," Luo Yuan explained. He had been there for so long that his name should have reached the top ranks by now. It would be strange if the military didn't come to recruit him.

"Do you have anything against the military?" Huang Jiahui was confused.

"Of course not. But I'm more familiar with the other side, and they're easier to deal with," Luo Yuan laughed.

The military was always tough, and they followed commands dutifully. Especially in this difficult situation, in the eyes of the army, everyone was a soldier. By contrast, politicians were much more tactful and easier to deal with.

Luo Yuan was used to acting freely, so it was hard for him to adjust to military life. Plus, no matter how strong he was, the power of an individual was negligible on the battlefield. Luo Yuan never expected that trouble would still find him, considering how much he tried to avoid it.

Less than five minutes later, there was a knock on the door.

## Chapter 272: Argument

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Wang Shishi opened the door. There was a middle-aged guy in a colonel's uniform behind Huo Dong.

"Brother Luo, this is Officer Liu," Huo Dong introduced them, standing aside helplessly.

Luo Yuan was surprised that such a great man would visit him. He walked over and said, "I did not expect your visit, but I'm glad you're here."

"I've been wanting to meet you, but I haven't gotten the chance. I heard that there was a super-evolved man from Desert City, and I just couldn't help visiting when I saw you guys pass by earlier. Please accept my apology for acting on my impulse," Officer Liu said with a smile. He walked into the room, shaking hands with Luo Yuan.

"We are pleased to welcome you, Officer Liu. We have nothing to serve you though. I hope you don't mind," Luo Yuan replied as he made room for him to enter.

"Indeed, this place is too simple. There's nothing much here. Little Huo, go bring a few cartons of canned food. I'll write an approval for you later," Officer Liu turned and told Huo Dong as he looked around the place.

Luo Yuan's expression changed as some thoughts formed in his head. Officer Liu seemed quite dominant.

"Yes, sir!" Huo Dong said quickly, looking pointedly at Huang Jiahui before leaving the room.

Huang Jiahui got his message right away. She made an excuse and then left the room along with everyone else, closing the door behind her.

"How can I help you, Officer Liu?" Luo Yuan asked directly when he saw everyone leave.

The man stopped smiling and sat down. Staring at Luo Yuan, he said, "Since you are being so direct, I'll just say it frankly. I heard that you haven't found a job yet, and it would be wasteful for you to have a normal job anyway. I'd like to know whether you'd be keen on joining the army."

Officer Liu was plump with a round face, and he looked kind when he smiled. However, his ordinary features made him look like a man with powerful military authority when he wasn't smiling. An ordinary person would have felt their limbs go numb and started to sweat when they saw him.

"Is this considered a recruitment?" Luo Yuan asked seriously.

"You may call it that, or you can consider it an invitation," Officer Liu said with a frown.

"I'm not sure if I can," Luo Yuan said calmly.

"Military service is an obligation for every male adult, and rejecting it is considered to be a betrayal of the country. Are you sure you want to say no?" Officer Liu said, clearly upset.

Luo Yuan felt furious, but he was not an ungrateful person. Captain Zhou, Commander Xia and several soldiers had helped him a lot along the way, and all of them had gained his respect.

The battles during the end of the world were a lot crueler than the battles during the First and Second World War had been. That was because their opponents were not humans anymore, but beasts. It was impossible for them to surrender, and they could not negotiate either. As soon as one joined the army, their chances of dying increased dramatically.

However, ever since he had entered the rehabilitation base, he had been influenced by the positive spirit of Desert City; the labor workers, as well as the hardworking students and the dedicated researchers. He had been affected by the environment, despite the fact that he used to be selfish.

If Officer Liu had been sincere, he would have said yes. After all, it was his responsibility to his family and the human nation, even though he did not like the army or wish to give up his freedom.

However, the man had acted dominatingly and tried to threaten him. Did he think Luo Yuan was some kind of pushover he could order around whenever and however he wanted?

Although Luo Yuan did not know much about the army, he had heard from Huo Dong that the third line did not have any good evolved men. Any men that they had were transferred to the front line. As a result, Luo Yuan knew Officer Liu's intention was to recruit him and hand him over to his superior in exchange for a favor.

He was scum compared to the soldiers who died to protect their country.

"Get out!" Luo Yuan yelled angrily, his expression changing. The emotions bottled up inside him suddenly exploded.

Officer Liu turned pale immediately, beads of sweat dripping down his forehead. Luo Yuan had unconsciously released his anger. He did not actually see him as an enemy. Otherwise, his soul would have been scattered and he would have fallen into a coma.

Fearful, Officer Liu felt a pain in his chest. He wanted to scare Luo Yuan again, but after witnessing his cold glare, he realized that this was not an evolved man trained by the military, but someone who had traveled through half of China and killed numerous mutated beasts along the way. According to Huo Dong, he could be a sixth level evolved man. There was a comment in one of the reports about him stating, "Extremely dangerous!"

He had to be insane to threaten Luo Yuan. Officer Liu did not dare stay any longer. He stood up and quickly left the room, forgetting to even say goodbye.



He opened the door and saw Huo Dong and the others standing there with a shocked expression on their faces. There were a few wooden containers set aside. Obviously, it was the canned food. Officer Liu smiled reluctantly before quickly walking away and disappearing from the corridor.

Zhao Yali quickly entered the room and asked anxiously, "Why did you insult him?"

He had been too loud, so everyone had heard him clearly. Officer Liu was the Guardian Officer, one of the decision makers in Desert City. Zhao Yali panicked at the thought of Luo Yuan offending such a powerful person.

"Brother Luo, Officer Liu is no gentleman. He will seek revenge. You should watch out," Huo Dong warned him.

"You're joking, right? You're the one who brought him here," Wang Shishi said angrily when she saw Huo Dong act like it was no big deal.

Huo Dong smiled awkwardly. He could not do anything because of his position. He would seem like a traitor no matter what he did. His happy days were over now that Officer Liu had been insulted.

"It's alright, Shishi. We can't blame Huo Dong this time. He had no choice. Perhaps I'm the one who caused him trouble," Luo Yuan said with a smile.

Huo Dong felt touched that Luo Yuan had defended him. He quickly said, "He is not the only decision maker. There are several more powerful people. He can't do anything to me. I'd rather he transferred me to the frontline anyway. I'll get rusty here."

"Luo Yuan, I think that you should go and apologize. Perhaps he would forgive you. You know Mayor Wu, right? Could you ask him for help?" Wu Xiaoxiao said.

"You're right. We could ask some more people if you don't have enough money," Sun Youde said, although he was actually feeling happy about the situation.

"Why would we beg others?" Wang Shishi said, clearly upset. "We might as well kill him. You know where he lives, Huo Dong, right?"

The room suddenly became quiet.

Sun Youde looked frightened at the words that had come out of her mouth. Are you kidding? He secretly observed everyone else. They did not seem to be joking. Everyone looked thoughtful, including Zhao Yali. She had furrowed her beautiful eyebrows. Who the hell are these people?

Wu Xiaoxiao looked frightened as well. Her face had turned pale. She was looking at their anxious expressions until Luo Yuan started to speak again.

"You think we're still in the outskirts or in the forest? We have to obey the rules of the rehabilitation base," Luo Yuan lectured Wang Shishi before he continued, "They would know we're the murderers if Officer Liu died right after visiting me."

"Besides, you can't just kill people whenever you have an argument. Let's see how things go. Hopefully, he can be slightly more rational," Luo Yuan said. He was not worried about the issue at all. He believed Officer Liu had forgotten all about the argument and could only remember his fear of Luo Yuan.

Wu Xiaoxiao was stunned as she listened to how calmly Luo Yuan talked about killing someone. She suddenly felt awkward being with the high school friend she had once been so familiar with.

## Chapter 273: Near

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Officer Liu returned to his room and sat on the bed. It was only a short distance but it seemed to have consumed all his energy. He naturally took out his cigarette and lighter and then tried to light his cigarette. Only after a few attempts did he succeed and he then took a heavy drag on his cigarette. The smoke from the mutated tobacco was inhaled into his lungs and his brain immediately felt dizzy. It took him a while to recover.

He suddenly felt cold and realized that his body was wet and his undershirt was soaked due to heavy perspiration. As one of the important decision makers of Desert City, the place he was staying in was a lot better than other peoples. The room was bright and spacious with numerous electrical appliances. It was almost the equivalent of a three-star hotel before the end of the world.

However, the cozy place he has did not bring any security to him and he hated it a lot. He wondered why the management arranged a single room for him because even a dorm with eight people is much better than being alone. He started to shiver once he recalled Luo Yuan's glare at him earlier. It was like an immeasurable amount of fear which could suffocate him. He has never felt so close to death in his life. Even thinking about it made him fearful.

Officer Liu had no doubt in Luo Yuan's ability to kill him even if he had armies under his command. What more when he was alone in the room. There were only two security guards and no one else. Those guards would totally useless against the likes of Luo Yuan.

"What if he comes and kills me today?" Officer Liu thought to

himself.

The frightening and scary appearance of Luo Yuan had been magnified and Officer Liu's body started to tremble. He even struggled to stand up and felt hopeless. The feeling lingered with him in his room along with a lot of frustration. It is one thing to feel stressed or worried but it is worse to know that there is nothing you can do about it.

The next morning, breakfast was delivered to him by a security guard. Only then did he realize that a night had passed and he was still alive! But his excitement quickly faded as he felt this could just be temporary. He proceeded to wave his hand to ask the guards to leave. He looked at the cigarette butts on the floor and massaged his face. His eyes were bloodshot and he thought to himself, "I must fix the relationship between us before he takes any action. The best thing to do is to transfer him to somewhere where he cannot hurt me!"

His eyes were blinking rapidly as he thought of this idea. Wanting to act hastily, he shouted, "Little Hu, call Huo Dong from the logistic department to see me."

He looked at the cigarette butts on the floor again and frowned. He then continued speaking, "Wait! Ask someone come and clean my room first."

...

Compared to Office Liu who had not slept well the entire night,

Luo Yuan was not affected at all. He was awake on time from his biological alarm. However, he did not go for training immediately like how he used to. Other than the granary, there was a corridor in the basement two. The room was very small; other than the beds on the both sides there was only a meter wide walkway. That was too narrow for him to go on with his usual training. Thus, he only relied on his Will to train his physique.

He suddenly touched his front teeth and smiled awkwardly. His teeth had grown extremely strong to the point where he could easily break the bones of a mutated beast by biting hard on them. However, it started to shake recently. Similarly, his other teeth have also started shaking and degenerating. "What's wrong with them? Should I remove them?" Luo Yuan wondered in his mind. He felt embarrassed to do so because when people see that his front teeth are missing they would laugh, especially Wang Shishi.

He was not concerned about why his teeth were loose as he always checked his body carefully with his Will. He was already familiar with the human body and understood that he was in the process of growing new teeth. Humans usually undergo teeth growth twice in a lifetime. Once when they are born, and another when they are around 10 years old. However, this is going to be the third time this will happen in his life!

Since he became an evolved human being, he has experienced multiple physical changes. His properties have been continuously strengthened by the system, but since this process is gradual the effect was not so obvious. However, his Strength has been increased by 60-70% while his Dexterity has been increased by 20%. His Physique has increased by 30% but he could not estimate the current level of his Intelligence. Nonetheless, he could perceive

that his thought process was more analytical nowadays as he could clearly analyze the cause of his problems. Based on his current abilities, he could easily kill three or more people who had the same strength he had one month ago.

...

Coming back to deciding what to do with his teeth, Luo Yuan finally decided to keep his front teeth until the day it falls off naturally to maintain his image. Based on the speed that his new teeth were growing, it should happen in the coming few days. Suddenly, everyone started waking up one by one and Luo Yuan no longer wanted to continue lying in bed. He did not take off his shirt as both males and females were staying together now. He removed his blanket and jumped down from his bed.

Huo Dong came in when he just finished washing his face. He called for Luo Yuan with a strange expression on his face. He took out a stack of food stamps and said awkwardly, "Brother Luo, this is from Officer Liu to express his apology. He would like me to tell you that it was just a misunderstanding. He hopes you can accept his sincerest apologies."

Luo Yuan had the impression that his efforts yesterday were quite good. It was such a big stack of food stamp; there were at least 10,000 pieces! He was so impressed that he did not even suspect Officer Liu could have been involved with bribery to be able to have such a big amount of food stamps. This was also because Officer Liu has partial authority to trade in the meats of mutated beasts. Thus, he must be very stupid if he needed to be involved with bribery to get these food stamps.

During the end of the world, some second-tier soldiers would travel to the outskirts to practice against many mutated beasts. Although they could not be compared to the frontline, they made quite a lot from those meats. Luo Yuan accepted the food stamps happily and said, "Please help me pass a message to Officer Liu. We will see how things go later."

"Alright, Brother Luo. How did you manage to pull this off? I think Office Liu did not sleep the entire night. His eyes were as red as a bunny's." Huo Dong asked curiously. Huo Dong did not sound like he had any respect for Officer Liu. Perhaps he was being pretentious in front of him. Luo Yuan looked at Huo Dong for a while and said, "I can tell you if you want to try its effects." He was hinting to Huo Dong that he could brainwash minds and make them follow his every instruction. That kind of power was sufficient to bring out fear from the bottom of their hearts.

"No, please." Huo Dong was frightened and quickly shook his head. Brother Luo was getting more mysterious these days; who knows what other scary powers he had. Huo Dong felt that he did not want to be a victim to anything dangerous from Luo Yuan.

Zhao Yali looked upset and pulled Luo Yuan aside. She whispered, "Little Yuan, it doesn't feel right to take other people's money. Shall we return it?" She looked tired as she probably did not sleep well last night. Luo Yuan tapped on her shoulder and Huo Dong immediately spoke before Luo Yuan could say anything to her, "Sister Zhao, don't create any problems for me, please. I wouldn't have a single good day if I fail to complete my mission."



Huang Jiahui was smiling beside him but she did not speak. She was not as weak as Zhao Yali and she has a lot more experience. She did not think it was a big deal to offend Officer Liu. Besides that, she believed Luo Yuan could handle the situation properly. Worst come to worst, they would just have to move out and wander around. They have gotten used to that life anyway.

"Don't worry, Sister Yali. He would worry if I don't accept it and we would be in even more trouble at that time." Luo Yuan explained.

"He is right. Yali, it's alright. Don't worry." Huang Jiahui tried to convince her.

Zhao Yali finally felt relieved when Huang Jiahui told her it would be fine. She then said to Huo Dong, "Since you're here, join us for breakfast?"

"Oh, no. I need to go. I have to report to Officer Liu, he is waiting for me." Huo Dong waved his hand apologetically and smiled awkwardly. He quickly left after a short chat.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan sensed the ground was shaking ever so slightly followed by a sound of two objects colliding. The sound was dull but heavy, just like thunder before the rain. It was very difficult for those who have experienced the apocalypse to forget that sound.

"Cannon! That's a cannon! The bugs seemed to have conquered the peripheral defense circle!" His expression changed

immediately.

## Chapter 274: Reunion

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"I wonder how the giant lizard and King Kong are doing." Luo Yuan was clearly worried. "I hope they survive." He thought to himself.

After breakfast, Luo Yuan took his Zhanmadao and pulled it out from its sheath. He felt as though his skin was being poked by needles. Perhaps, it was because he has been influencing it with his will and it could also be because he turned his saber into a weapon which is as powerful as a beast. Usually, it was difficult for insects to go near to it but now even dust would not fall on it as well.

Wu Xiaoxiao looked at it for a second and felt scared. Since the incident from yesterday, she tended to keep a safe distance from Luo Yuan and that made Sun Youde feel relieved. Luo Yuan wiped the blade with his palm and then inserted it back into its sheath again. He felt calmer now.

Right before noon, the environment in the shelter became panic-stricken as many of the soldiers retreated from the front line and returned to the refuge. Many of the medical crew members were deployed under the announcement from the authorities through the speakers. The situation outside the shelter was getting worse - a second and third batch of injured soldiers were sent back. The severity of the injuries was getting worse as well. Basement one was soon fully occupied and by that evening, basement two was cleared and converted into a military ward.

The atmosphere was filled with the smell of antiseptic and there were many people wearing protective suits spraying antibacterial

solution at every single corner of the ward including the blankets and tableware.

The guarding soldiers of Desert City felt as though they were being attacked by huge armies. Many of them were on duty near the hospital and were fully armored. They could constantly hear firing sounds along with screaming and moaning from the victims.

The powers of these mutated beasts were strange and some were very poisonous which could infect genes and spread viruses. It would certainly not be a minor injury if you get hurt. Parasite infections, mutations, and infections were very common among wounded soldiers and fortunately, the rehabilitation base has learned its lesson from previous encounters and now have a better management system.

Luo Yuan could not stand the strong smell of antiseptic so he walked out of his room. Unfortunately, the corridor area was now almost as bad as the inside of his room which did not make things better. Suddenly, the door from the opposite room was opened and a well-built man who was about two meters tall walked out from the room.

Luo Yuan naturally looked at him and the guy smiled and took out a packet of cigarettes. He was offering one to Luo Yuan but he proceeded to only light one cigarette and smoked alone after learning that Luo Yuan was not keen to accept. Based on Luo Yuan's general observations, this man must have been an addict before and had not smoked for a long time as the entire cigarette was puffed away in just a matter of seconds.

Luo Yuan's nose was sensitive enough to pick up his foul odor which could not be covered by the smell of antiseptic. He could not control his eyes and looked at the man again. It was apparent that the muscular man had not bathed for a very long time as he could see thick layers of dirt accumulated on his skin. Besides that, the clean clothes he was wearing could not really fit his body. Luo Yuan pondered and asked, "Hey friend! When did you move here?"

"This afternoon. I came with the soldiers!" The buff man smiled and said.

Luo Yuan felt something was wrong as the residents of Desert City should have moved in yesterday. He did not say anything but asked, "This afternoon? I'm just curious... are you a soldier?"

"You don't think I look like a soldier, do you?" The buff man asked.

"Those who came here are injured but I don't see any signs of injuries on you. And... yeah, you really don't look like one." Luo Yuan smiled and said.

Luo Yuan got a little pissed off as there was hardly anyone who dared to be so cocky in front of him lately. Suddenly, a guy with a pair of spectacles came out from next door and glared at the buff man. He said in an unsatisfying tone, "What are you doing outside, Lao Xie? Come in!"

He then smiled to Luo Yuan and said, "I'm sorry, my buddy is very rude. Hope you don't mind."

"Oh, it's alright. It was nice to talk." Luo Yuan smiled and said.

Luo Yuan stopped smiling as he saw the two of them enter the room. Those people were up to no good and they both looked familiar to Luo Yuan. He must have seen them somewhere before.

...

"Lao Xie, you're too careless! I've told you to be more careful. None of them are ordinary people here. Luckily, I let Peng Hui go out to find you, otherwise, the soldiers would have come." Su Yu said with an upset expression.

"I didn't do anything, I was only trying to scare him." Lao Xie lowered his chin and muttered. He did not argue as he knew the scary power of that young chap, Su Yu. He was nothing compared to Su Yu, even though he had the strength of a giant.

"Threatened him? Damn it! Do you know what you are doing? You should know better that this is not the forest anymore. This is a rehabilitation base! We are yet to have the authority to do anything we want. Are you expecting Sister Mo to settle all our problems? Su Yu said sarcastically. An electrostatic field suddenly formed in the room as he got agitated. Sparks could be seen and heard from the room.

"I'm wrong, brother. I won't repeat it again." Lao Xie quickly apologized as he could feel the pain of his hair being pulled due to the electrostatic force.

"Alright, alright. He did not mean it, Xiao Yu." Mo Qiwen said weakly. Her face was pale and her skin looked white as she just fell sick.

"Since Sister Mo helped you, I'll let you go. But please don't repeat the same mistake." The young guy felt sad for Sister Mo and became calmer.

Those people were actually the wanderers who were seen by Luo Yuan earlier. After entering the refuge, they realized it was very difficult for them to control the entire Desert City.

"I've walked around just now. The office of the municipal government was sealed tightly with a high level of security. There must be many evolved men inside. I was blocked before I could get any closer. It will be very difficult to enter unless we attack them." A guy who looked ordinary but had sharp eyes said.

"They are challenging us. The soldiers on guard duty would not ignore us and by the time the rehabilitation base is able to fight, Desert City might have already collapsed." Su Yu said with a very serious expression but then sighed. Based on his level of power, he could easily rule Desert City. He did not have to act so carefully or make any plans in fact.

"I can try again tomorrow. I think I'll be fine tomorrow after resting." Mo Qiwen said.

"What you should do now is to rest and get well soon. We will see

how things go. It's not necessary to rush as we have time." Su Yu said. He would not let Sister Mo take the risk even if they are going to fail.

Although her hypnotization power is very effective, there were limits and restrictions to it. It would consume a lot of her energy to hypnotize someone or something. Moreover, the stronger the Will of that person, the more energy it would consume.

All the while, she has been hypnotizing seven or eight people simultaneously which has consumed almost all her energy. She was near to death but luckily for her, she managed to recover just before passing out.

Su Yu did not say anything but he was worried. Although they finally entered basement two after a few trial and errors, their illegal identity would be exposed in no time. By that time, he would have no choice but to get Mo Qiwen to use her powers.

He raised his chin but sighed in his heart. He wondered why ordinary people could not understand the fact that they were going to be extinct if they were against development and could not evolve or adapt. Although the current strategy did not sound morally right, he felt that it would lead to a brighter future later.



# Chapter 275: New Mission

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Everyone in the refuge was anxious and felt insecure in the past two days due to the noise from the bombings as well as the sight of many injured soldiers returning to the refuge. Especially today, almost half of the soldiers on guard duty have now been posted to the frontline. Fortunately, Huo Dong was in the logistics department and did not have to follow them. However, he knew that safety would not last forever.

The frequency of his visits have been increasing over the last few days and his conversations were full of negativity. Luo Yuan did not intend to ask him anything. However, based on what Huo Dong said, he did not seem to think that the future of the rehabilitation base would get any better.

On the third day, Luo Yuan with his sensitive six senses could clearly hear the buzzing sound of mutated bugs' wings. Apparently, there were numerous mutated bugs near the city. On that day, speakers which were installed to cheer the residents up and to announce good news from the battlefield had stopped working. It was extremely quiet in the area.

On the fifth day, there were no more injured soldiers being sent to the refuge and the sound of bombs going off began to reduce. It seemed like the war had come to an end. However, soldiers that were sent to guard the frontline never returned. Huo Dong had been staying in the hostel the entire day. Everyone was anxious and nervous. Many did not even utter a single word as they knew the situation was getting worse instead of better.

The troops were either all dead or had retreated strategically. The city was left behind and the refuge had become an abandoned town. Time had passed and the great migration did not happen according to how it was planned. Luo Yuan finally knew the reason when he received a message from the system in the afternoon.

"D-Level mission: Clear all mutated bugs at the train station underground. Time Restriction: None. Accept/Decline."

Luo Yuan expression turned serious... he took a deep breath and then clicked 'Confirm'!

He knew that he had to complete the mission regardless of whether the purpose was to upgrade his power or migrate smoothly. He thought to himself that perhaps he could bear the unstable or uncertain life and live a good life. However, he knew that not everyone could live a life like that when he looked at Huang Jiahui and Zhao Yali.

They were looking forward to a stable life in a peaceful environment. They wanted to be free and to live confidently instead of being anxious and feeling insecure all the time. These were not the days that Luo Yuan could relax either. He also wished to have a life where he did not need to keep his eyes half open while he sleeps and hold his saber tightly every single second.

Based on their current situation though, he could not decline the mission. For him or for them, it was the same. He sighed silently and wiped his clean Zhanmadao again although there was no dust on it.

"Luo Yuan, are you alright?" Huang Jiahui asked softly. She looked at Luo Yuan anxiously as she could sense he was not in a good mood.

"I'm fine, just thought about something suddenly. Don't worry, things will get better." Luo Yuan stopped frowning and then smiled to Zhao Yali.

However, what she returned to him was a supercilious look. Luo Yuan actually felt extremely stressed at that moment. That was the second time he received a D-Level mission after the special mission of killing the Giants. It meant that he might be able to meet a green level creature during the mission.

Green level creatures are totally different compared to those of a lower rank. Those which were below the green level were nothing out of the ordinary. However, once they rise to the ranks of a green level creature, their life would become very colorful as they would have numerous superpower. For example, the snake scales which he had could split mountain and water; the feathers of the green bird had an ionic plasma force field which proved how scary and powerful some creatures could be. It has been almost half a year since he killed the giant snake with some luck. He is much stronger now as his strengths, intelligence and dexterity have been upgraded by 50 % compared previous times. His combat abilities have increased more than 10-fold. Besides that, he has been getting more familiar with his own properties and skills. Now, he has already transferred all his knowledge into every single cell in his body. However, he believed that it would be just as messy as the previous encounter he had with those super creatures. He held his fists tightly as he thought about that.

After lunch, a government official came as expected. Luo Yuan was surprised that it was not Secretary Zheng. Instead, it was a middle-aged lady. She was not that young anymore as he could see the wrinkles at the end of her eyes. Her kids should be around seven to eight years old if she had one or more. Her skin was fair and her body figure was well maintained. She looked professional and elegant. However, her attitude was dull just like a typical government servant who spoke precisely without any emotion. It made Luo Yuan feel curious. Based on her attitude, she probably did not know his identity.

Usually, almost all the government servants treated him passionately and courteously but she did not, which made him feel curious about her. Due to his special identity, he used to receive a lot of 'care' but he was wondering why the upper management would send someone who knew nothing about him this time. Understandably, he had no interest in politics now and he did not think more about it. He picked up his saber and then followed the government servant after saying goodbye to everyone. Luo Yuan peeped at the room next door before he left, the room was empty with the door left opened.

"Have the people living there moved out already?" Luo Yuan was trying to find something to talk about while walking with her.

"I have no idea because I'm not in charge of hostel matters." The lady said and walked very quickly without turning back.

"Do you know how many people will be joining the mission?" Luo Yuan smiled and asked.

"I am only in charge of informing all evolved men in the B1 area. I don't have the complete name list with me!" The lady frowned and said.

"Oh, do you know..." Luo Yuan wanted to continue but was interrupted.

"I'm just a regular clerk, you can talk to the chief secretary of the evolved men affairs section from the Civil Affairs Bureau if you have any more questions."

He wanted to ask about Secretary Zheng but did not expect to be interrupted like that. Luo Yuan did not try anymore.

...

Luo Yuan was unlucky as he was the first one to be notified. Thus, he had to accompany the lady to inform every evolved man on her name list one by one. An hour had passed by the time everyone rushed to the training room and gathered there. They waited another half an hour until everyone was finally there.

That was the first time he realized there were so many evolved men in Desert City! He glanced across the room and got the number in just a few seconds. The total was 78 people. Most of them were wearing the uniform of a soldier and the rest made up less than one-third of the crowd. Apparently, most of the evolved men have been recruited by the armies and the rest... His good sense of hearing suddenly heard two of the evolved men talking

and he realized those who were not in uniform were not normal citizens as well.

"Captain! What's happening now? How is it so that security guards have to go to the frontline?" An evolved man complained.

"This is the arrangement by the upper management, I'm not sure." Another evolved man said softly, "But I heard that was approved by the committee board!"

"All these people are nonsensical! Who is going to protect the government if all of us go together? There are many extreme evolved men nowadays!" That evolved man said with an upset expression.

"There are armies guarding the place, don't worry!" The evolved man who was being assigned as the captain said arrogantly.

He then continued, "However, we need to be very careful this time. Otherwise, we might die. There are many mutated bugs out there, I can foresee half of us might not be able to return."

"Sure, Captain! I'll be careful. We can get the soldiers from the squadron to help each other. That will be safer." The other evolved man nodded and said.

"Just do it, I will get the Lieutenant Colonel."

...

After a while, a marching sound spread into his ears. A huge Lieutenant Colonel came together with his fully armored soldiers and marched into the hall. He glared around the place and everyone immediately became quiet.

He was very tall and buff; his face looked strict and serious with an extremely clean and neat uniform. He gave quite a good first impression to Luo Yuan.

"Well, most of you are soldiers and there are some of you from the government security section. I understand that there are some who are classified as non-governmental evolved men. I'm not good at giving a sweet talk or giving any false hope, however, I know the main duty of a soldier is to obey military instructions. You can opt out if you have a different opinion.

No one spoke a single word including Luo Yuan.

"Excellent!" He said with a satisfied look and continued, "This mission is very important as it is related to the important assets of the nation as well as its people. It is related to the safety of nearly 100,000 residents in Desert City, which also means it is related to the life of your family members. As an evolved man, I always believe that the stronger we are, the more responsibilities we must bear. Someone who has no collective mindset could not survive for long in this cruel world even if he is very powerful."

"Alright, I'm going to stop the nonsense now! I'll lead the troops this time to complete the mission!"

"Everyone, get ready now. Let's go!"



## Chapter 276: Desolated city

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The officer was very strict, and the contingent was surging forward.

"The officer should be an evolved man as well, otherwise, those people would not obey his instructions." Luo Yuan felt relieved as he had such a reliable and powerful teammate. They should be able to complete the mission smoothly.

He was afraid that he had stupid teammates which would end up being a burden to him instead. Although the officer was quite dominant, Luo Yuan understood that they needed someone like that to control all these self-centered evolved men.

Anyway, the mission was very dangerous as mentioned by the system and Luo Yuan felt stressed about it. It was good to have that officer as their leader and Luo Yuan believed that he might do the same thing if chaos struck and there was no leader. However, he would not be an official one. Luo Yuan suddenly had the idea that if the officer killed one of the evolved men to warn the rest not to disobey that would further increase the likelihood of the men obeying his every command.

The iron grill of the refuge slowly opened and the team was greeted by familiar sounds created by the hydraulic jet. All the sounds outside became clearer now and they could clearly hear mutated beasts scratching against the iron door. It was extremely annoying.

A few of the evolved men began to sweat and their footsteps were getting slower. The reason that they were still running was simply because they wanted to maintain their image and to avoid disobeying military instructions. When they passed by the stairs of the corridor, the officer raised his hand to ask them to stop. He was giving them instructions on what to do when the iron grill opened. The officer used hand signals to instruct them to be alert and then they heard bullets being loaded. Most of the military evolved men lifted their rifles as well and readied themselves to shoot. The breaths of every man became heavy.

Time passed and the iron grill slowly opened. The scene outside was now reflected clearly in their eyes and they realized all the mutated beasts were missing.

"There is nothing! Seems like they have been frightened by the sound of the opening door." A big guy quickly checked the surroundings and then chuckled.

"Shut up! Everyone be alert! The mutated beasts which have made it this far would not be so stupid. I suspect..." The Lieutenant Colonel warned them.

Before he could finish his sentence, a huge bug the size of a bread car emerged from a hidden place. Its black and metallic limbs popped out in a flash and stabbed directly into the forehead of the guy who was laughing earlier. His strong skull was penetrated by the alloy-like limb of the mutated bug.

Even the speedy recovery power which Lin Xiaoji had could not save him from that kind of injury. His eyes were opened wide with

a partial grin on his face as he could not believe it. His body shook a little and he died before he got to use his power. Perhaps, hunting would be considered quite easy compared to this.

The mutated bug did not leave immediately. It scanned the surroundings with its eye. Perhaps, it thought that was an easy source of food. However, its thoughts were quickly disturbed by the firing of a gun which was specially designed to kill mutated beasts. 15mm tungsten core with armor piercing and a big diameter. The bullets flew out from the muzzle at a speed of 900 meters per second. Its power was much stronger than the Barrett Sniper Rifle that had existed before the end of the world. Due to the post-apocalyptic interruption of global shipping, many countries became lonely islands and many of the technologies had been lost.

However, these military technologies were well preserved. After the start of the apocalypse, the whole society had struggled to survive as many of the resources in the society were allocated towards the military. The obvious result was that the military technology developed drastically. At the moment, what is clear is that they have a stronger version of bullets and alloys. This was coupled with evolved men with strong physiques who had survived until this very moment. When the enemies changed from humans to mutated beasts, certain super-weapons began to appear. And the modern rifle was one of those weapons.

The hard shell of the mutated bug shattered into powder under the powerful attack. Each of its wounds were around 20-30 cm in diameter. Some of the wounds on its abdomen were a few big holes as the bullets penetrated the abdomen.

The mutated bug shrieked sharply and then fell onto the ground.

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He was just laughing at someone and then died in an instant. Even though they are fully aware the high possibility of death from the mission, they still felt shocked by how quickly it all happened.

Luo Yuan remained silent and held his saber tightly. The mutated bug they encountered was not that powerful after all. At most, it could be a dark blue creature, which at that moment was considered very easy to kill. However, because Luo Yuan was walking in a packed crowd, he would not be able to do anything even if a mutated bug suddenly appeared in front of them.

"I say once again... no talking along the journey... no shouting. Move, now!!" The Lieutenant Colonel shouted and then called two soldiers to move the corpse aside.

Everyone was more familiar to the cruel world of today and did not even care about how the corpse was being handled. It was almost 2 pm which was the hottest time in a day. The haze in the sky above Desert City had disappeared and it seemed like a sign that the city would return to its forest age.

Luo Yuan took this opportunity to analyze the surroundings. The small town beside the quiet border has now become dull and dead. Most of the buildings were made from wood after the apocalypse. Perhaps, it was difficult for the mutated bugs to change their preference or it could be because they migrated without resting,

hence, they did not mind to eat anything they found.

In his eyes, the entire city had become a wasteland except for a few tall buildings which were made from high-quality concrete. Those buildings probably stood there reluctantly. The haze and smoke have disappeared and the rest of the bugs were gone. There were only a handful of mutated bugs that remained in the city. Even then, some of them which were injured and abandoned by their community, while those which are severely injured should be dead by now and classified as food for other living bugs. It was not hard to spot carcasses along the journey surrounded by a big bunch of flies.

Even though Desert City has now become a dead town, it was still very dangerous. In the world of the animals, the lion which has just eaten would allow a zebra to run in its territory and would even allow hyenas to fight for food or challenge each other in front of it. However, a hungry lion will hunt all living things within its vision. If the lion was injured, perhaps its strength would be weaker but the power it would put into its attacks would be the strongest because it would die if it missed the chance.

Over the past few days, many people had been attacked by injured mutated bugs once they stepped out from the refuge. These bugs seemed to have totally lost all rationality. Luo Yuan saw a bug which had lost its lower body dragging its internal organs with a greenish liquid oozing out. It was struggling to rush towards him. However, it was not a big deal to those evolved men who were already well prepared.

Only now did Luo Yuan realize he had underestimated these

evolved men. Although most of them were not very powerful, some of them had very strong strengths while others had good dexterity. Luo Yuan even saw an evolved man with three eyes and another had two faces in one body along with four arms. All these sights had widened his perspective.

Although all those evolved men had different kinds of powers, they were nothing if compared to Luo Yuan's capabilities. However, the powerful weapons and their special physique could be very useful to the team. In the group, there were a few evolved men who gained Luo Yuan's respects. One of the evolved men seemed to be able to control metal. He was so powerful that the metal in the wasteland flowed like water. A huge mutated bug which did not even manage to get closer than 20 meters had already been speared by a metal bar. After the attack, the metal melted and flew towards him before traveling up from his feet. Within mere seconds, it became a silver armor.

Another evolved man could vaporize the air within a three to four meter radius around him. Even if stones were in front of him, they would turn to dust. Luo Yuan could not control his excitement and kept watching. The power of telekinesis is very powerful and scary. However, if those stupid bugs did not try to attack, they would not know how powerful it is. Based on Luo Yuan's observation, he would have become dust as well if he entered this evolved man's force field without any protection or defense. Luo Yuan likened the situation to possessing a gun as a kid. The strong power a gun had and the ability to use it in a real fight were two different matters.

## Chapter 277: The Giant

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These easy battles could hardly stir any interest from Luo Yuan. He was more attracted to the various kinds of evolutionary powers that were being used by these evolutionary men.

A black mutated bug thought it finally had the opportunity to attack and quickly sprung towards Luo Yuan. The crowd quickly fled the vicinity and one of the evolved people wanted to pull him away but did not manage to catch Luo Yuan as he unintentionally moved away. She lost her balance after failing to catch Luo Yuan and could not escape. The crowd was aware of that but could only sigh for her.

Suddenly, a strong wind could be felt and the black mutated bug dropped onto the ground like an inanimate object. A shallow pit was created from the fall and the bug involuntarily shook a few times and then stopped moving.

One of the men who was idling was standing half a meter away from the dead bug together with the female who was trying to save Luo Yuan. They both basically did not move at all during the entire process. The only thing running through their minds was that they were lucky to see a dead mutated bug. Half of the bug's head was sliding down from its body. Unfortunately, the crowd was gone and none of them saw it.

"Take good care of yourself... don't force yourself to help if you're not strong enough. You will die if you do so!" Luo Yuan pulled the lady aside and continued, "By the way, thank you."

Even this fight was too easy to trouble Luo Yuan or make him worried. His senses are very sensitive to moving objects so it was not too difficult for him.

Wen Yujie was stunned for a moment and said, "I didn't help you, but you..." She looked skinny and weak. Luo Yuan felt she was very light when he was trying to rescue her from being hit by the bug. Her flat chest made her look like a premature young girl.

Luo Yuan said, "You know yourself, huh? I just didn't expect there to still be kind people like you. It's rare even before the end of the world."

Wen Yujie understood his message even though she was hardly considered bright. Her face became rosy as she replied, "I know you're strong, but that's not the reason you should be sarcastic to me. If everyone is like you, how can there be hope? Humans would be extinct!"

Luo Yuan was stunned and then continued, "Fine, you're better in morality. Anyway, thanks for helping. Stay behind me, I'll take care of you."

"Who cares?" Wen Yujie shouted out loud but she was happy. She had seen his power earlier. Well, she did not see anything but she certainly felt that she was pulled by a great force. That was how she knew his power was unexpectedly strong.

While talking to her, Luo Yuan casually killed another mutated bug. This time, Wen Yujie opened her eyes widely and saw a blurry



blue light but could not see anything more. She did not even know whether he moved his hands or what weapons he used to kill the bug. She was clearly amazed as she is already an evolved person so her eyesight was considered to be better than the average person and yet she still could not see anything.

Wen Yujie would sneak a peek at Luo Yuan on some occasions before finally mustering the courage to ask him curiously, "Hey, how come I've never heard about you even though you're so powerful?"

Luo Yuan replied jokingly, "My name is not 'Hey'. Also, I haven't told you my name, how do you know you haven't heard about me before?"

"What's your name?" Wen Yujie asked. "I don't think it's a well-known name. My house used to be around this area and I was amongst the first batch of residents here. I'm not trying to brag but I've seen most of the evolved men in the city." Wen Yujie said arrogantly.

"Can't believe you're an aboriginal." Luo Yuan was surprised and said. No wonder she looked slightly like a Westerner. She was indeed very lucky. People like Luo Yuan had to go through so many challenges to get there but she was born in the west!

"Brother, you haven't told me your name." She quickly remarked.

"You'll know later, just shut up for now." Luo Yuan looked up to

the sky and looked calm. Wen Yujie imitated his actions and looked up to the sky but her face immediately turned pale. The situation was getting worse. They did not realize when the sky had started turning dark. The wings of the mutated bugs were looked like hundreds of helicopters were flying about in the sky. Almost all the mutated bugs in the city came over as they heard the dying bugs crying before breathing their last breath.

After a short pause, all the mutated bugs suddenly fell to the ground. In just a few seconds, there were many carcasses scattered all over. Luo Yuan was finally intrigued. The Zhanmadao in his hand kept slicing the air and every single bug which was about five meters away from him were split in two. He caught everyone's attention.

Unfortunately, some corpses were added to the pile of carcasses as Luo Yuan could not take care of everyone. Finally, the Lieutenant Colonel removed his military uniform and tore off his shirt and chucked it aside. He looked up to the sky, took a deep breath, and then roared extremely loudly. All his muscles immediately expanded and black blood vessels were bulging under his skin which made it look like numerous big worms were crawling under his skin. Just by looking at the Lieutenant Colonel, Luo Yuan could feel his beast-like nature.

Wen Yujie suddenly shouted, "Move! He is going to evolve!"

She then pulled Luo Yuan away to escape. However, Luo Yuan pushed her hand away and asked, "What's wrong?" Later, he realized the remaining survivors had been stepping backward and they looked excited!

"He is going to evolve, you'll be hurt if you are too near to him."  
Wen Yujie shouted.

Only then did Luo Yuan follow the crowd and step back. There was no one standing within 30 meters of the Colonel. Luo Yuan was watching him curiously as his abnormal symptoms were only at an early stage. However, in only a second, he grew rapidly from 190 cm to more than three meters! He was still growing!!! The explosive changes looked excruciatingly painful to him as his facial expression changed to become full of rage. He suddenly squatted down and both of his hands punched on the ground as he roared!!!

The ground was shaking under the power of this non-human. The concrete road suddenly became like bean curd as stones and rocks were flying everywhere and a huge pit was formed.

His evolution finally stopped as he slowly got up from the ground. Suddenly, a strong wind blew towards them and Luo Yuan involuntarily took a very deep breath as he looked at the huge body of the Colonel which was even bigger than the King Kong.

He was about 14-15 meters in height which was the equivalent of a building with five floors. His skin was a metallic black and his muscles were like ancient roots intertwined with each other. All of this made him look extremely fearsome and powerful. Such changes were extremely fearsome to normal people as it was against the laws and theories of physics. Luo Yuan could not figure out how did a human who was about 80-90 kg morph into a giant with weighing more than 10 tons.

The colonel was about to do something when Luo Yuan was still trying to figure out how this was possible. He took a deep breath and then roared into the sky. His roars sounded like thunder and they could see some waves in the air. Many of the mutated bugs were hit by the wave and fell onto the ground. He then randomly grabbed a bug from the sky and the bug, which was only the size of a mini car, splattered in his fist and all the green liquid oozed out onto the ground.

These mutated bugs were gifted with some basic knowledge. They could now recognize threats and would gather to attack in such instances. Luo Yuan quickly realized the weakness of the giant which is his dexterity. It was just slightly better than that of an ordinary person. The giant was trying to catch another bug but he did not seem to be successful.

Many of the mutated bugs rushed to the Colonel and poked their sharp limbs into his body. At the same time, they also bit and ate his flesh. Fresh blood was dripping down from his wounds and the rest started to worry. However, the giant was too big and powerful that the wounds did not actually cause any pain to him although it was about half a meter deep.

Those mutated bugs have been starved for a long time now, hence, they became frantic and out of control when they got to taste his flesh. Despite the giant's slow speed, he still managed to squeeze and squash a few bugs and pull them out from his wound one by one. However, more and more mutated bugs attached themselves on him and bit his flesh again and again. The Lieutenant had realized at this stage that the strategy of using his body as a lure could not last long as it would cause him to die.

Suddenly, something shocking happened in front of Luo Yuan. He noticed that the giant's wounds recovered rapidly. All his wounds disappeared in less than a second and there were no signs of injuries on his body at all. Even though Luo Yuan's eyesight is extremely good, he did not realize any sign of self-recovery through regeneration of new muscles. Alternatively, it should be a form of supplement transfer within his body. Luo Yuan's speculations were proven right when the height of the giant dropped by about 10 cm.

More and more carcasses filled the area under the feet of the giant and slowly formed a few hills. It appeared that those mutated bugs finally understood the power of their opponent. In just a few seconds, all the remaining bugs flew away and disappeared. The sky turned bright once again.

The giant looked at the sky but still had a serious facial expression despite winning the battle. After that, his huge body began to shrink and soon he was back to his normal size again. Other than his slightly pale face, he did not seem to feel weak at all!

The Lieutenant Colonel put on his uniform again and looked at Luo Yuan. Unexpectedly, he walked towards Luo Yuan and said, "Can we talk?"

# Chapter 278: Conspiracy

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Luo Yuan looked at him in surprise. "You know me, cadre?"

"You can call me Xu Zhiqiang. Nice to meet you, Mr. Luo. I didn't recognize you earlier. I've only seen photos and videos of you, but I have been watching you."

Luo Yuan was stunned. He had not realized that he had been recognized. His earlier transformation was not merely to get out of danger, but also to show his abilities at the same time. He was concerned that his rebelliousness would cause conflict. It seemed like none of the people at the top of the military or political ranks were ordinary people.

"Okay, is there anything I can do for you?" Luo Yuan asked.

"Can I talk to you in private?" asked Lieutenant Colonel Xu Zhiqiang.

The two of them walked to a corner while all eyes remained on them. Everyone was stunned. Xu Zhiqiang thought for awhile before he said seriously, "I realize that this mission is very unusual. I was not notified of your existence, and that should never have happened. I was skeptical at first, but now that I have met you, I understand what's going on."

Luo Yuan frowned as he said, "I think you might have gotten the wrong guy. There's nothing special about me."

"No, the Desert City doesn't have the right to mistreat a level-5 evolved person. From what I understand, the government considers you a VIP. But that's just one of my many doubts!"

"I don't think I have anything to do with this. I'm not interested in politics."

Xu Zhiqiang's expression did not change at all as he continued, "Mr. Luo, this has nothing to do with politics. You don't realize how serious this problem is. The evolved humans gathered here are made up of more than 90% of all evolved people in the Desert City, and all the artillery weapons I requested before the mission were rejected without any valid reason."

"Are you saying that the Desert City is planning to wipe out all evolved people?" Luo Yuan stared at him coldly. He was concerned that this might involve Huang Jiahui and the rest, who were still in the Desert City, and he was exuding a terrifying vibe.

Luo Yuan's force field had reached a state where it was no longer predictable and he could not control it himself. On normal days, nothing happened, but when he was agitated, it could be released through his Will.

Ordinary people's anger was scary, yet harmless, but when Luo Yuan was furious, it could cost the life of at least one light-blue level beast. Nobody could stop him. Although this happened unintentionally, it was unbearable for ordinary people. For a second, Xu Zhiqiang had difficulty breathing and his temples

pulsed hard, but he managed to endure it thanks to his strong Will.

"Is this the difference between a level-5 and a level-4?" he thought to himself. Luo Yuan looked terrifying as he transformed, and Xu Zhiqiang knew that his gigantic body and powerful abilities gave him the strength to kill as many people as he wished. Once a mutated creature reached light-green level though, it would slow down for a while.

Xu Zhiqiang had never killed a level-5 creature on his own until now. His official evolution level was still level-4, and he had always thought that there was not much of a difference between level-4 and level-5. Unfortunately, he had totally underestimated Luo Yuan's abilities. He was not a level-5, but a level-6.

...

"Your abilities are so much more powerful than what they'd estimated!" Xu Zhiqiang said helplessly with a poker face. "You need to calm down though."

Luo Yuan felt his heart beat hard. He forced out a smile, the terrifying vibe he'd exuded earlier vanishing. Relieved, Xu Zhiqiang said, "What you said just now might be possible, but the chances are very small. They would be digging their own graves if they did that. The New Capital City would never do something that was not in its people's favor. What I'm suspecting is that the Desert City is controlled by someone else."

"Who could control Desert City? And what would they do with



these 10,000 people in this cruel world?"

"The idea might sound ridiculous to you and me, but those village farmers are full of themselves. Our world has never lacked foolish or greedy people, especially during recent years. We have seen so many of them," Xu Zhiqiang said solemnly. He seemed to be recalling something unpleasant.

Luo Yuan frowned, thinking for a while before he said indifferently, "So what do you want me to do? If it's going to put me in a difficult situation, you can forget about it."

Xu Zhiqiang did not mind his attitude at all, as he had been told to be cautious of evolved people and try to please them. The great purge had caused most of them to avoid politics, and especially such sensitive incidents. Luo Yuan's attitude was understandable. Not many were as passionate towards authority as he was.

"It will not put you in a difficult situation, but rather in a neutral one."

"I will pretend that I don't know anything," Luo Yuan said calmly.

Xu Zhiqiang gave him a satisfied smile, "Of course I'm just guessing. Perhaps the situation is better than we imagine. Anyway, we should discuss this after we have completed the mission."

As Luo Yuan was leaving, he looked Xu Zhiqiang deeply in the

eyes. Now that his Intelligence was +14, even a quick, unintentional scan could give him an almost perfect analysis of one's instincts. Xu Zhiqiang was using his power to show his abilities, trying to persuade him to complete the mission instead of going back to the shelter to find out what was going on. This man certainly had an agenda of his own. He possessed a strong desire to control others, so he was without a doubt a very dangerous person.

Unfortunately, this was not some common mission, but a Grade D mission. "Hopefully, I will not die in the process", Luo Yuan thought to himself. His information was insufficient, and this was only one side of the story, so it could not be trusted completely.

...

As soon as Luo Yuan came back, Wen Yujie asked curiously, "Do you know the special team's leader?"

"He knows me, I don't know him!" Luo Yuan replied.

"If you want to brag, at least try to make some sense," Wen Yujie expressed her resentment as her face flushed in anger. The others were staring at her, some in disdain and others in mockery.

"First, I never brag. Secondly, if you want to live, you should shut your mouth from now on!" Luo Yuan said as he stared at her.

Wen Yujie let out a soft groan. She was not sure why, but her anger vanished as Luo Yuan stared at her. She walked up to Luo

Yuan immediately.

"This is certainly very useful," Luo Yuan thought to himself.

...

Perhaps most of the mutated insects in the Desert City had been killed earlier, and some of them had been badly injured or left behind, because their journey was uneventful. However, there were a lot of them traveling, and there was a lot of tension. It was already 3 p.m. when they arrived near the train station.

They could see the station in the distance, but they had to adjust to everybody's pace, so the journey there was unimaginably long. Luo Yuan felt stressed out as he thought about the defense system. Most of the trains in the reconstruction area were underground, but there were buildings on top of the station divided into freight and public transportation.

As the agent linking the entire city, the quality of the construction played a vital part. Not only had the buildings been built using cement, which was rare in the Desert City, but the defense system was also entirely military grade.

However, the majority of the enormous buildings had collapsed. The district looked like it had been burned. The strange thing was, although Luo Yuan did not see any fire or smoke, the air seemed slightly distorted when he tried to look in the distance. The temperature was obviously very high.

"Let's take a look!" said Xu Zhiqiang.

He took the lead as they walked towards the buildings. When they were 500 meters away, they could feel a wave of heat coming towards them. The closer they went, the higher the temperature got. Some of the evolved people could not handle the heat and backed out. Xu Zhiqiang did not force any of them to follow him. If they could not handle the temperature outside, they could forget about completing their mission inside.

As they were approaching the edge of the burned parts, the temperature reached 70 degrees, and more and more of them backed out. Luo Yuan noticed that Wen Yujie was sweating and her skin had turned red, yet she did not say anything.

"You should go back too. You should not be here."

"The heat isn't enough to scare me away. I haven't even used my power yet!" said Wen Yujie. She did not want to embarrass herself.

"Shut up! I'm asking you to go back." Luo Yuan stared at her.

He had a strong Will, so he could make anyone listen to him even without using his power on purpose. Wen Yujie pouted and groaned, but she eventually left.

The burned concrete ground was still being baked under the high temperature, becoming crispy and sandy. There were crackling and sizzling sounds as they stepped on it. Most of the facilities had

been burnt, and what was left was only a pile of ashes and a looming cloud of smoke.

The temperature inside was currently over 70 degrees. Only six of them, including Luo Yuan, remained at the scene. As carbon-based organisms, they were naturally vulnerable to high temperatures. Their proteins would start degenerating when the temperature reached 70 degrees Celsius. Even the strongest evolved person with mutated genes and a high heat resistance could not survive in 100 degrees Celsius. That kind of temperature would cause their cells and blood to start boiling.

Luo Yuan looked at the remaining people. Perhaps under the government's suppression, keeping a low profile had been instilled into every evolved person's mind, because those people did not ring a bell at all. Obviously, they had not played a part in the earlier battle. They exuded a low-energy vibe, so it was obvious that they were thinking of quitting.

Xu Zhiqiang frowned and stopped immediately. "The difficulty of this mission has exceeded our expectations. Only a few of us were able to make it this far! Before the new tactic arrangement, I would like to introduce to you a very powerful evolved person. Perhaps most of you have heard of him."

He looked at Luo Yuan, and Luo Yuan nodded at him before Xu Zhiqiang continued, "This is Mr. Luo Yuan. The only level-5 evolved person in the Desert City."

Under the unusual circumstances, Xu Zhiqiang had lowered his voice, but it was still a shocking moment for everyone. They were

all curious. Luo Yuan was not aware that his name had been circulating around the Desert City for a long time. He had become kind of a legend. People had been hearing his name, but they had never actually seen him in person. They had not expected this quiet young man to be such a mysterious person.

# Chapter 279: Light

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"Hi Mr. Luo, I've heard of you! My name is Hu Lianqing, and I'm a fire based evolved human. You can call me Mr. Hu!" Hu Lianqing sounded full of excitement. He looked like he was meeting his idol.

"My name is Xiao Baihong, and I'm a metal based evolved human. My friends call me Iron Flask!" said Xiao Baihong with a laugh as he scratched his head dumbly.

"My name is Shen Jixing, and my power is Air Shock. It's a pleasure to work with you," Shen Jixing said calmly, yet arrogantly.

Luo Yuan smiled as he nodded. Shen Jixing reminded him of Lin Xiaoji. They looked like a similar kind of person.

"Little Shen's ability isn't bad at all, but he's still a long way from reaching level-5. Hi, Boss Luo. My name is Li Qingqing, and I'm a mysterious evolved human. I didn't realize that you were so young!" said the only woman in the group. She seemed mesmerized by Luo Yuan. She looked like she was interested in him, but unfortunately, her looks were below average. Apart from her nice body, there was nothing attractive about her.

"My name is Peng Guohua, and I'm a flesh based evolved human. I'm an expert in defense. It's a pleasure to be your teammate," said a laughing hunk.

Luo Yuan glanced at him. He was tall and muscular like a gorilla.

He gave the impression that he was extremely strong, but instead of coming off as aggressive, he actually looked like an honest person.

Luo Yuan frowned. He had sensed a hint of madness and distortion in his laugh, a vibe that hinted that he was insane. That was pretty common though. Living through the cruel apocalypse, oppression and darkness were the only themes the world offered. Everyone more or less had some sort of mental illness, especially those working in the military. Luo Yuan did not think about it any further.

Xu Zhiqiang encouraged them once again, "Considering that this mission is very tricky and the circumstances are very unusual, besides the victim's pension, which is indispensable, I would like to make an exception for you. This time we will have to turn in 30% less than we usually do, and Mr. Luo's portion will be given by the superior. I think the superior won't deny such a request."

There was something hidden between the lines of that last sentence, but besides Luo Yuan, no one else noticed it. There was joy on their faces. Luo Yuan was listening to the rest calculate how much they would get at the end of the mission. Only then did he realize that before the evolved people headed out on a mission, they had to turn in 50% of their loot. Afterward, they had to split the loot with their teammates. What they got, in the end, was pathetically little.

Compared to the filthy rich front-line soldiers, evolved people were just a bunch of poor wretches. Of course, if they compared themselves to common civilians, they were a lot better off.



After hearing the good news, the happy team continued its journey. Xu Zhiqiang approached Luo Yuan and asked softly in complete seriousness, "What do you think?"

"No doubt, the city was burned by a fire based mutated beast. I can't identify its attributes, but one thing is for sure. It must be hard to deal with," said Luo Yuan, covering the whole truth. He knew that if they knew how terrifying this mutated creature actually was, they would probably lose any will to fight.

To him, these people were the bait that would lure the super creature out of hiding. However, his attributes and confidence were not the same as they had been before, and Luo Yuan knew very well that one small mistake against a super creature could cost him his life. Perhaps he was being selfish. Even without Luo Yuan, the team would still have carried out the mission on their own, despite their bad odds. The only thing he could do was kill that mutated creature as fast as possible and save as many people as he could.

Xu Zhiqiang nodded in concern. There was an oppressive atmosphere in the area, and he felt as if it was smothering him. Suddenly, a sense of remorse rose inside him, but he managed to suppress the feeling. He turned around and asked softly, "May I know what level of attributes you have?"

"Level-5, I think. Maybe even more than that. I just arrived at the reconstruction area, so I haven't been tested properly."

Xu Zhiqiang looked at him. Unfortunately, there was no expression on Luo Yuan's face, so he could not analyze him. Just as he was about to question him further, something happened.

"Leader Xu, Mr. Luo, there's a gigantic hole up ahead! Should we keep going?"

As they'd been talking, they had fallen far behind everyone, and the people in front had gone into the cargo terminal hall.

"Let me take a look at it!" Xu Zhiqiang said, walking towards the hole quickly.

Luo Yuan followed him. The cargo terminal hall was a large area of over 10,000 square meters. There were piles of container boxes everywhere. Obviously, there had not been enough time to move all the cargo when the worm tide had struck, as there was half a warehouse worth of cargo in there. The hole was in one of the corners.

Luo Yuan took a look at it. It was approximately 100 square meters and 10 meters deep, and it was linked to the train tracks underground. It was dark inside, and they felt like there could be monsters coming out of it at any time. It gave everyone a chill.

Luo Yuan stepped onto the ground hard, whipping up fine, carbide-filled sand. The signs of desertification there were obviously worse than in the surrounding area.

"There's a train track under the hole. The mutated creature should be in there. Let's look for a way in," Xu Zhiqiang said seriously.

The train track was more than 10 meters under the ground, so no ordinary person could jump in just like that. However, due to the collapse of the building, a big amount of concrete had been stacked together, forming a slope that led underground. This was not difficult for a bunch of evolved people by any means.

They hopped into the giant underground tunnel swiftly. The place was airtight, so the temperature in the tunnel was obviously higher. It was close to 80 degrees, so it felt like they were entering an oven. Apart from Luo Yuan and the guy named Hu Lianqing, who were not affected because they were both fire based evolved humans, the rest were dripping in sweat and their faces were red.

As a fire based evolved human, such conditions were nothing for Hu Lianqiang. Luo Yuan had survived thanks to the plasma undergarment he was wearing. Although he already knew it was equipped to protect him against most energy attacks, and heat was a source of energy, the effect still exceeded his expectations.

Except for the burning sensation on the parts of his body that were exposed, he was otherwise unaffected by the heat. As he was quietly folding his sleeves, he noticed that his equipment was blinking with a dim fluorescent light. Compared to the light he had seen in the morning, the brightness had increased significantly. Apparently, his equipment could not just block out the heat, but also absorb its energy at the same time.

He pushed down his sleeves and gripped his sword firmly. In such a sealed space, the existence of the super creature could not be concealed anymore. It was as if it was a natural disaster. It felt like there was a black cloud smothering them, filling them with boundless fear in that dark space.

Barely a few steps later, the dim light of the tunnel disappeared. The place became pitch black. If it wasn't for the glow sticks that were scattered around on the ground along the way, Luo Yuan might not have been able to see clearly. His eyes could not radiate light after all. Vision required the reflection of light. In that sealed underground space, there was not even the slightest trace of light.

"What do you guys think it is? A worm or a monster?" Xiao Baihong asked slowly, his voice shaking.

Nobody mocked him for his trembling voice. As a matter of fact, except for Luo Yuan, everyone else looked afraid.

"Shut up! Don't make any noise!" Xu Zhiqiang said in frustration.

Silence filled the tunnel, until all they could hear was their own footsteps and pounding hearts. The gravel occasionally falling from the holes nearby scared them.

The tunnel was broad. There were four train tracks stretching from left to right. They were different from usual train tracks as they remembered them. The distance between the tracks was very long. Each gap was approximately two meters away from the next, and the tunnel was about 20 meters wide and six meters tall.

Luo Yuan noticed that there was a deep scratch with some kind of gelatinous liquid on the wall on the left side of the tunnel.

It seemed like this creature had been separated from its tribe and gotten injured, thus getting forced to stay there.

Luo Yuan was relieved. In any case, an injured mutated beast would be much easier to deal with compared to a healthy mutated beast.

When they reached a corner of the tunnel, they all stopped moving at the same time. It was as if they had turned into stone; they could not move their bodies at all. An intense fear made their hearts almost stop beating. There was a light shining in the distance. In that dim light, a gigantic creature appeared before them, exuding an immense pressure. It had a pair of flame-shaped pincers with long hair, and it was curling right on the train tracks. From the look of it, it had to be only slightly smaller than the tracks. On its body, there was a pair of long, gold-gridded wings similar to a cicada. Its texture was like gold, and there was a sting as long as its whole body on its tail. It was black, and its look alone gave them goosebumps.

It was lying on the ground, not moving, its body glowing as the brightness changed with its movement. Although it was lying down, it was still more than five meters tall. Its back touched the top of the tunnel, almost blocking the entire space. Although they were looking at it from a distance, it still looked extremely intimidating.

# Chapter 280: The Madness In Desperation

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If it were not for the shocking one-meter big wound on the giant bug's left wing, they all would have run away immediately.

"Gosh, that wound is bad. All we have to do is punch it a few times, and it will collapse for sure," said Peng Guohua in a low, shaking voice. Out of nowhere, he started charging balls of thunder on his palms. There was a crazed look on his face.

"No, we should retreat!" Luo Yuan was upset. The tunnel was too narrow, so it was not suitable for battles. Even with his +15 Agility, he would not be able to move freely. If the giant bug was to assault him, there would be nowhere for him to run. He usually had a 50 to 60 percent odd of winning, but in such an environment, the odds were less than 20 percent.

"Yes, Mr. Luo is right. Let's go back, this creature is too strange. We need an extensive battle plan," Xu Zhiqiang said immediately, snapping out of his thoughts.

The creature was too terrifying. He believed that he was not a coward. Even though he had a high-ranking position and he was the one leading the mission, the creature before them was too overwhelming.

"I'm giving up on this mission!" said Li Qingqing, the only woman in the team. She looked very pale.

"Don't tell me you guys have lost your guts! This is just an injured

mutated beast," said Peng Guohua with a grin. His emotions were obviously off. "Watch how I'm going to kill it!"

"You're a lunatic!" Li Qingqing yelled at him before she ran away.

Li Qingqing's condemnation was abrupt, and it was certainly strange that she ran away right afterward. Luo Yuan was skeptical. Suddenly, he heard the sound of screws being loosened. He paused and looked at Peng Guohua. Balls of thunder were developing on his palms, and there was a green smoke coming out of it.

Luo Yuan knew that something was wrong, and he ran through the crowd shouting, "Damn it, we have to run now!" He did not care if his voice would wake the mutated beast anymore.

"F\*ck, you're really crazy!"

"If you want to die, don't drag us down with you!"

None of these evolved people were ordinary, considering that they had managed to survive this far. They noticed that something was not right and started running as soon as they heard Luo Yuan.

"Don't run too fast, wait for me! Please wait for me!" Peng Guohua had lost his usual smile. His voice was rough with an indescribable excitement. Thunder was still rumbling in his palm as he followed the rest like nothing was going on.

"He has completely lost his mind! Boss Xiao, please use your

power now!" Hu Lianqing shouted as he turned his head around to take a look. He sounded terrified.

Peng Guohua was only a step away from him. Hu Lianqing was a fire based evolved human, so if he used his power under the circumstances, he would only trigger and speed up an explosion. If an explosion took place so close to him, he would not be able to survive it, even though he was an evolved person.

"Damn this lunatic! He wants to kill us all!" Xiao Baihong heard Leader Hu say in despair. His words gave him a chill.

"Quick, go faster! There's not much time left!" Shen Jixin shouted in madness. The air started to shake as if it was preparing to fight the explosion.

"You guys don't f\*cking disturb me!" Leader Xiao was using the power in his entire body, his veins bulging on his neck.

Peng Guo felt the thunder in his palm transforming at the speed of light. The concealing mask he had on his face had been completely torn off, revealing his savage expression.

A spark was produced, and suddenly there was a giant flame ball burning on his palm. It was snuffed out the next second.

The rest of them turned around and looked at him in fear. Relieved, they stopped running.



"Peng Guohua, you owe us an explanation!" Hu Lianqing said.

"Explanation? The only explanation I have is that we'll all go to hell together!" There was no fear on Peng Guohua's face as he spoke. He just proceeded to laugh like a madman. One of his hands was burnt, exuding a disgusting barbecue-like smell.

"Who sent you here? You haven't killed anybody yet, so it's not too late for you to repent!" said Xu Zhiqiang, trying to delude him. It was not easy to train an evolved person to be a martyr. Considering the abnormality of the mission though, he had already solved half the mystery.

"It's too late, the monster has been awakened! All of us will die!" said Peng Guohua, laughing hysterically.

The ground started shaking, and there was a sharp noise that sounded like a worm and a bird. The temperature in the tunnel was shooting up.

"Damn it, run fast!" Xu Zhiqiang shouted in distress as he ran away.

"You can't run away, I will wait for you in hell!" Peng Guohua remained standing exactly where he was, watching the rest of them run away. As the temperature spiked, blisters developed on his skin. The blisters turned into yellow fat and started dripping down his skin. Feeling that he was reaching his limits, he opened his eyes, which were dry from the scorching temperature, and yelled, "Beware of that beautiful woman, and take revenge for me!"

Suddenly, his stomach started to expand and his eyes opened wide, steam coming out of his whole body. Within seconds, his stomach was bigger than a 10-month pregnant woman. It became transparent, and his eyeballs popped out like marbles because of the pressure, rolling down on the ground. Then there was a loud thud, and his body exploded.

Li Qingqing was running in the very front, looking desperate. She was a mysterious based evolved human with prophetic abilities, so her abilities were very rare. Although she was not very strong, she could predict what would happen in the next second, which could be a very useful ability in a battle.

With this ability, she was always able to avoid danger, which made her superior to other evolved humans that looked more powerful. However, her mysterious ability was redundant at the moment. All she could see was that things were about to go south. Her footsteps were getting slower, her vision was getting blurry, and her mind suddenly went blank. Eventually, she collapsed on the ground.

"No!" she screamed in desperation.

...

Hearing Li Qingqing's shriek in the back, Hu Lianqing was stressed out. He was using all his power, so there was a thin, turquoise flame surrounding him, and the air around him was distorted. The flame was a terrifying one. He was experimenting, it

made the common ironware in his hand turn completely red within 10 seconds. After 30 seconds, it started to melt.

If that flame touched a human body, that human would either die or get badly injured. In the Desert City, nobody dared go near him during a battle. He believed that even Luo Yuan, who was a level-5 evolved person, would not go near him.

The temperature in the tunnel was not too high, 200 degrees at the most. As a fire based evolved human, that kind of temperature would usually not affect him. The surface of his skin could absorb it and turn it into energy. However, the temperature in the tunnel was unique. It felt like it was released from within the body, so it was irresistible and could not be absorbed at all. It seemed like it was meant to burn him alive.

"Don't run around, let's find a shallow place to hide! This is like a microwave!" shouted Shen Jixing, who was running in front. As an evolved human with a similar wave ability, he was sensitive to the waves in the air. He could sense right away that there was something strange in the air.

A microwave was a radio wave between 300 MHz and 300 GHz. The heat produced by the molecular shocks in things absorbed waves, such as water and organic matter. The heat was directed on the surface of the molecules, which rendered the defense of the body useless.

"Damn it, I should've thought of this earlier!" Xu Zhiqiang shouted. He looked terrified as a thick layer of fat dripped off his burning body. The fat on his skin seemed like it was melting. It

was falling off while he was running, and new skin kept growing.

He saw a two-meter high piece of concrete that had fallen from the top of the tunnel in front of him and he hid behind it immediately. Relieved, he felt the temperature of his body slowly decreasing. A few seconds later, he saw Hu Lianqing tottering up to him. His legs were weak, so he sat down on the floor.

"Come here quick, it's only a few more steps!" Xu Zhiqiang said loudly.

"I can't do this anymore, leave me alone!" Hu Lianqing forced out a smile as his body released a terrifyingly high temperature. Under that microwave heat, his abilities seemed to get out of control. The flame on his body was getting more and more intense, his entire body eventually burning. He was burnt to ashes instantly.

"Damn it! Damn it! Ah..."

Xu Zhiqiang heard Xiao Baihong and Shen Jixing's footsteps far away, but Luo Yuan was nowhere to be seen. Loneliness and desperation devoured him as this recent scary incident crushed him. Xu Zhiqiang punched the ground hard and groaned like an injured beast.

The microwaves in the tunnel were getting more intense, so hiding behind a rock was not a good enough solution anymore. He heard footsteps approaching slowly, the sound getting clearer. Whoever it was had to be hurt because the pace it was approaching was not very fast. However, considering their huge body size, their

speed did not sound slow at all. Perhaps there was no way for Xu Zhiqiang to leave this place in one piece.

He felt a sense of remorse. Maybe the mission itself had been a conspiracy, but he'd thought he'd been smart to take the initiative and be a part of it.

"Even if I die, I will not have died for nothing," he said to himself softly. Out of nowhere, he became ferocious.

"Ahh!" he let out a roar, tearing his clothes apart.

Within seconds, he had turned into a giant once again. Hunching down in the tunnel, he stared furiously up ahead, "Come at me, you little worm!"

# Chapter 281: Cruel Battle

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Compared to the first time, Xu Zhiqiang's body was nearly twice as small when he turned into a giant. The first time, his height had been almost 15 meters, but now it was only eight. However, considering that the tunnel was six meters tall at the most, he was still too big. He was actually forced to hunch.

Soon, that was no longer his main worry though. Under the effect of the strong microwaves, the cells in his body had started dying at an alarming rate. They were released from his body together with his blood and flesh, his body shrinking gradually. This unique self-healing technique was absolutely terrifying, but against such a powerful foe, it barely afforded him the ability to live a little longer.

The light at the end of the tunnel was getting brighter. Suddenly, a glowing beetle appeared in front of him, a strong force filling every inch of the space. The intense fear and heat felt like a burning flame, causing Xu Zhiqian extreme pain. At the same time, they triggered a vicious part of him. He let out a loud roar, picked up a giant rock next to his foot, and tossed it over. The giant rock, which weighed about 10 tons, rolled vigorously in the tunnel, producing a loud noise.

The giant bug's ice cold stare was taunting. It did not stop moving at all. When the rock was 10 meters away from it, it just backed off quickly. Meanwhile, a shadow flashed by like lightning. The giant rock was hanging in the air. A black tail as thick as a washbasin pierced through the giant rock, causing it to hang in mid-air before it was flung and crushed against the wall. A loud thud was produced, and there was a light quake on the ground.

Xu Zhiqiang watched in desperation. He could feel his body melting like a candle, a big amount of fat piling up under his legs like a hill. Within seconds, his body had shrunk to a size that did not allow him to stand up straight. He sensed that he would only live 20 seconds at most. Death was coming for him.

Looking at the giant worm approaching him, he remained calm. Struggling would have been pointless. The ground shook intensely for a while. At first, he thought he was hallucinating, but soon the vibrations were getting more and more intense. There were cracks of all sizes on top of the tunnel, and gravel and dust falling. It felt like the tunnel was about to collapse.

"Is this an earthquake?" Xu Zhiqiang mumbled. He was leaning against the wall, unable to stand still during the quake. Perhaps shocked, the giant bug started screaming and backed off slowly, but the ground shook vigorously once again. A loud thud could be heard, and giant rocks as big as discs started falling from the top. The tunnel was collapsing.

As the radiation from the microwaves subsided, Xu Zhiqiang's numb heart began to beat again. His eyes brightened up as he began to run for his life. Although the giant rocks were still falling, that did not stop him from running.

When he reached the entrance that they'd come in from, he could not help but turn around. He saw a blurry shadow jump from the top before the tunnel was blocked completely by the rocks.

"That could be Luo Yuan!"

...

Luo Yuan, who had been waiting outside for a long time, could not bear to see the rest of them sacrificing themselves for him. He could find countless excuses to argue that what he did had been the right thing. For instance, the mission would have had to go on even without him. Maybe the goal of the mission was too hard to achieve. Even if he'd risked his life, he could not have saved them all.

It was easy to lie to others, but the most difficult part was lying to himself. He could not bear to do that. He had never thought of himself as a saint, but then again, he was not ruthless either. Life was just a number to him. He was just an ordinary person. He tried to do good within his abilities, but he wouldn't risk his life for it. He would do things that were selfish, but he would never initiate anything that was inherently bad.

He knew that the mission was dangerous and it would mean certain death for low-level evolved people, yet he had not stopped them. He had even thought of using them as cannon fodder, which was not far from murder.

When he jumped down from the top of the tunnel, the pressure in him was gone along with the strong wind. His spirit became clean once again, and there was peace in his heart. He was smiling without even noticing it, and he eventually closed his eyes.



His Sensory Perception, which had stopped growing, was expanding at the speed of light. 60 meters, 70 meters... It would not stop spreading. It was approaching 100 meters now...

"After a round of Spirit Baptism, you have gained +1 Sensory Perception point." A system notification popped up in his head.

Although Luo Yuan was not aware of it, despite the chaos, he was even calmer and more rational than before. There was no fluctuation on his emotions at all. His body had landed on the ground as light as a leaf. As soon as his feet touched the ground, he opened his eyes to look at the bug that was puzzling him. His eyes were clear, sharp and focused. With a slight change in his thoughts, a thin layer of Will enveloped his body. The layer was as thin as a hair, glowing in the dim light. It seemed like it could be snuffed out at any time. Although weak, the microwave radiation that had killed a few of the evolved people earlier was completely blocked out of his body.

The plasma undergarment Luo Yuan was wearing had the same function too, except that it did not consume any of his Will. Unfortunately, it could not protect his head, which was sticking out. Suddenly the air became restless, and the gravel at the entrance of the tunnel started shaking vigorously. Some smaller pieces were floating in the air as a terrifying vibe spread around.

Sensing Luo Yuan's energy, the giant bug felt uneasy and took a few steps back while chirping in a sharp tone. The glow on its body was triggered, and it shone a few times brighter than before. It was a warning, but looking at it from a different perspective, it could also have been its way of showing its weakness. Perhaps Luo

Yuan's terrifying energy was making it uncomfortable.

Suddenly, it became an enormous source of light, lighting up the entire tunnel like it was daylight. The intense microwave radiation was causing the temperature in the tunnel to increase at an alarming rate. Soon, the temperature reached a few hundred degrees. It felt like the air was going to catch fire. That strong radiation made the layer of Will on Luo Yuan's body start to shake slightly, his Will depleting fast.

Luo Yuan frowned, looking at the giant bug calmly as he slowly approached it. The depletion of his Will did not seem to bother him at all. Under the influence of energy, sand was flying everywhere in the tunnel, visibility inside it decreasing fast.

Perhaps the giant bug was badly injured or maybe it could not endure such immense stress, but the terrifying, yet mysterious bug showed no intention of fighting at all. As Luo Yuan made his way towards it, it kept backing away from him.

Its enormous pincers were opening and closing, letting out a sharp noise. Its black scorpion tail swayed in the air, looking like it could deliver a critical hit at any time. The giant bug had all its attention fixed on that small, yet terrifying person in front of it, so it was unaware of what was happening behind its back. It had not noticed that a giant, one-meter tall rock had fallen during the earthquake earlier, not far away from the bug's back. As a result, the bug stumbled upon the rock.

Seizing the opportunity, Luo Yuan pulled out his Zhanmadao. There was the sound of his sword rubbing against the scabbard

before Luo Yuan disappeared from where he was standing. Suddenly, his speed reached its limit, and gravel started swirling in the air from the energy under his feet. Thanks to the sandstorm in the tunnel, he was nowhere to be seen.

The giant bug noticed that something was wrong and started chirping again. Its pincers, which were as big as large excavators, were high up in the air. The pair of antennae on its head that looked like whips were moving left and right, trying to trace Luo Yuan's location.

An insect's antennae were its second pair of eyes. They were crucial for their smell and touch, and some of them even helped insects hear. Considering that there were many sensory and smell properties on the antennas, they were connected to the central nervous system. They were highly sensitive and they could sense objects and air, as well as different kinds of smells, even if they were far away. Sometimes, the antennae played an even bigger role than the eyes; for instance, during hunting.

It seemed like the bug had sensed something. Its tail was moving fast, and suddenly it was thrusting its front left violently at a terrifying speed. There were stripes of milky white, ultra high-speed airflow piercing a hole in the sandstorm. The bug had missed, even though it was usually very accurate when it came to estimating distance. If anyone could see what Luo Yuan was doing, they would have noticed that he had managed to avoid the giant bug's tail when it started to move. The increase of his Sensory Perception had not only increased the range at which he could sense but had also made him extra sensitive to moving objects. In addition, he had acquired a new prediction ability that allowed him to avoid attacks even before they happened.

Such an ability was important during a battle when the slightest mistake could lead to death. When the bug's tail paused at a straight position after its last attack, a light glow struck through the air. The glow faded immediately, followed by a light noise as if a piece of metal was being sliced. A small part of its tail fell off and crashed heavily against the ground.

Luo Yuan retracted his Zhanmadao, his hands shaking. The bug's tail had been harder than he'd thought. Despite his Will, it had still been strenuous to use the sword. A similar incident had happened when he had been fighting against a green-level snake, but it was impossible to compare the two. Perhaps this mission had been ranked D Grade because the giant bug had been injured. If it had been perfectly fine, its power might have been even more horrifying.

However, that did not stop Luo Yuan, who ran through the sandstorm like a shooting arrow, straight towards the bug. Within a few breaths, he was already 10 meters away from it. Luo Yuan's 180-centimeter height looked small compared to the giant bug though. He did not even reach its jaw.

The bug snapped out of its pain. Luo Yuan sensed a shadow above his head before a pincer slightly smaller than a round table smashed upon him. As a human with a superhuman body, facing a giant bug heavier or stronger than him was challenging. If an attack involved air pressure, he could be blown away easily. Physical strength was more powerful than anything else, so sometimes it was difficult for him to even approach his opponent.

He did not dare fight back forcefully against such an attack. His best quality had never been his defense or strength. He just walked two steps to the left and stepped onto the wall. His high Dexterity made the wall seem like a horizontal surface to him.

As the bug's pincer smashed against the ground, Luo Yuan took a few quick steps on the wall, and then stomped hard it, producing an echoing noise. His tremendous power made a hole in the concrete wall before he ran towards the giant bug as if he was walking on the ground.

The impact from the pincer's collision could still be felt. Large amounts of gravel were swirling fast in the air, occasionally hitting Luo Yuan before bouncing back from the clothes he was wearing. Luo Yuan grabbed the bug's joint, which was glowing brightly, and flipped himself onto it. He was confident that he could finish it. Just as he was about to end the mission though, an intense sense of danger rose inside him. He noticed that the layer of Will on him was shaking rapidly, melting and collapsing. A terrifying heat was burning like fire through his exposed body parts.

He had never thought that the body of the giant bug would be the source of the microwave radiation. The power of its radiation was a few times stronger than the radiation in the air. The Will layer Luo Yuan had been relying on was beaten by the radiation and melted away completely. Amid the chaos, Luo Yuan managed to remain rational and calm and get out of the situation fast.

Within a few seconds, his face was blushing as red as blood. Dazed, he felt as if he was losing his sanity as he stumbled, almost falling to the ground. He bit the tip of his tongue hard, feeling a

bitterness in his mouth. He was not at the top of his game.

Out of nowhere, he snapped out of it and tore off his clothes. He covered his head with the plasma undergarment, and the temperature on his head decreased rapidly. His abdomen were still burning like fire, but he could not be bothered anymore.

The giant bug's senses were sensitive, so it knew that Luo Yuan was around. It started to hit the wall hard, the wings on its back flapping immensely. An intense wind was blowing, preventing Luo Yuan from standing up. Upset, he held onto the spikes on the bug's back desperately as he tried to balance his body.

He could feel his body losing strength at an alarming rate. His body functions were shutting down, and parts of his skin that were exposed were exuding a light barbecue fragrance. He did not have much time left. Taking advantage of the interval between the giant bug's hits, he groaned and mustered his remaining strength, using the wind produced by the bug's flapping wings to jump onto its head.

Before he landed, the Zhanmadao, which was giving out an immense glow, pierced straight into the giant bug's head. The hit took all the strength he had. Luo Yuan let go of his sword. He had lost all his strength, and he fell on his head from five meters high. He collapsed hard against the ground. Unable to move anymore, he fell into a coma.

## Chapter 282: Prison

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Luo Yuan slowly regained consciousness. When he opened his eyes, he realized he was seeing double. He blinked a few times, and his vision became normal again. Realizing that he was in an unfamiliar environment, Luo Yuan grew cautious. He was looking for his Zhanmadao, but he could not find it. Suddenly, an unimaginable pain hit him, almost knocking him out. Even though he was very perseverant, he could not help but let out a moan.

"Are you awake?" a girl said in surprise.

The voice sounded very familiar. When he recalled who it was, Luo Yuan stopped struggling and sat up.

"Where are we?" Only then did he realize that his voice was husky. He was actually on the verge of losing his voice completely.

"In prison!" said Wen Yujie.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan's head started hurting immensely. He calmed himself down and asked, "What happened? Why are we here? Where are the others?"

"I have no idea. While we were on our way back, the guards surrounded us and took us away. I heard that Lieutenant Xu and the rest were getting ready for a mutiny when the Desert City lost contact with the Reconstruction Area. They said that we're implicated in this, but we will be released as soon as they find out what's actually happening," Wen Yujie said with hope.

Luo Yuan's eyes were slightly closed. He was trying his very best not to think. He was tired after that short conversation. After a while, he opened his eyes and said, "How long was I in a coma?"

"Three days. I thought you were going to die, but you got better every day."

"Were you the one who saved me?"

"No, I'm not capable of doing that. It was Lieutenant Xu who asked me to take care of you before we were placed in this cell," said Wen Yujie shyly. Suddenly, she seemed to have thought of something, but she looked hesitant to tell him. "Oh... There's something I want to tell you, but please don't be angry."

"What is it?" Luo Yuan asked.

"During the interrogation, I told them that we're husband and wife. You were badly injured and in a coma, so they made an exception to allow us to stay in the same cell," Wen Yujie said, clenching her teeth as she mustered her courage. She was blushing.

Luo Yuan could not help but cough. He thought for awhile before he said discreetly, "Can't blame you for that. After all, you were just being nice. Alright, I'm tired. I need to take a rest."

Suddenly, he realized that Wen Yujie's mentality was very



different from his. She was scarily naive, which made her seem out of place amid the apocalypse. She was one of the aboriginal people who had just moved there at the beginning of the apocalypse. She had never experienced any sinister events, so that explained everything.

...

When Luo Yuan closed his eyes to check his condition, he realized that it was worse than he'd imagined. Not only could he not concentrate his Will temporarily, but even his Sensory Perception had deteriorated to a level lower than ordinary people's. He could not move his body either. This was the worst injury he had ever suffered. It was unbelievable that he was even alive considering his condition.

He brought up the system silently, and the attributes panel appeared before him.

"Character: Luo Yuan"

"Occupation: Hunter"

"Level: 10"

"Experience:24,720/153,600"

"Attributes"

"Strength: 7 (15)"

"Dexterity: 6 (15)"

"Physique: 6+5 (14)"

"Intelligence: 14 (14)"

"Sensory Perception: 14+1 (14)"

"Will: 15+1 (15)"

"Skills: Science 16, Math 14, Mandarin 19, English 16, Finance 17, Computers 9, Dancing 1, Art 3, Gaming 6, Negotiating 9, Socializing 7, Cooking 3, Driving 1, Hand to Hand Combat 19, Sword Skill 6, Gun Skill 6, Casting 15"

"Special Skills: Identification Technique, Synthesization Technique, Detection Technique"

"Natural Abilities: Earth Stomp (Level-5)"

"Status: Severely Injured"

"Unassigned Attribute Points: 0"

"Unassigned Skill Points: 0"

"Incomplete Missions: None"

"Haunted Locust Heart"

"Rarity: Blue"

"Weight: 100g"

"Materials: Spirit-Based Active Crystal"

"Additional Abilities: Will+1, Sensory Perception+1"

"Remarks: This is a rare active crystal, whose value is far higher than its assessment. If you carry it with you, it could speed up the Will and Sensory Perception consumed as well as level them up."

Luo Yuan frowned. The attributes panel, which was usually green, was now an alarming red. Apart from his sub-attributes, the rest of his attributes had suffered a steep drop, especially his Strength, Dexterity and Physique, which were no more than +7 (the figures in the brackets were only their original points).

"No wonder I can't move and my breath is short. My body feels like it's been pressed against by a ghost as heavy as a giant rock."

Luo Yuan felt stressed out.

A normal male would usually have an attribute of +10, while an adult female would have +9, a teenage girl above 10 would have +8, and kids would have +7. His Strength and Dexterity were almost the same as a six-year-old kid's.

Such weak strength could obviously not support his 90 kilos. The pain felt like a fire burning in him, and even breathing was painful for him. Apparently, his lungs must have gotten injured too.

However, there was no change to his three major sub-attributes. Perhaps the damage was only critical on the outside. There was no other explanation why these three sub-attributes would have maintained their points.

Luo Yuan was worried about Jiahui and Shishi, considering that he had been there for three days. Now that the situation was unstable, perhaps Xu Zhiqiang's speculations would be proven right. If that happened, he would have been involved in the conspiracy, but he hoped that the rest would not be implicated as well. Who would have been so greedy after all?

He felt a chill go through his body. He took a deep breath and pushed away all his concerns. Considering that he was pretty much helpless now, what with his strength being weaker than a kid's, such thoughts would only add to his worries. Instead of piling up unhealthy thoughts, he had to focus on his recovery.

Luo Yuan emptied his mind. Ignoring the intense pain in his

brain, he tried to concentrate his Will forcefully. Usually, that would have been as easy as breathing, but now it was extremely difficult. Before he knew it, he was dripping in sweat, and the bed was completely wet. The immense pain made his body twitch. A few minutes later, he passed out once again.

...

Sweet drops of water moisturized his dry lips. Luo Yuan swallowed the water and regained his consciousness. Wen Yujie put down the bowl of water clumsily while flipping her hair. The feminine gesture surprised Luo Yuan. From what he remembered, this woman had been just like a guy to him.

"How long was I out this time?" he asked in a husky voice.

"One day!" Wen Yujie said. She was clearly upset, and her eyes were red. "You should have been sent to the hospital, but these people just don't care."

"I am a repeat offender. Even the death sentence is not enough for me. They would never send me to the hospital," said Luo Yuan while shaking his head.

"But we are innocent. I believe that justice will be served one day," Wen Yujie said.

"The world is not just black and white. Nevermind, let's not talk about it now," Luo Yuan sighed before he continued, "Did you hear

any news recently? Did anyone come here?"

"No one, except the people who bring the food," Wen Yujie said in disappointment.

Luo Yuan did not feel hungry. Apparently, Wen Yujie had fed him while he had been unconscious. He felt warmth in his heart. He brought up the attributes panel, relieved to feel alive again. In one day, his Dexterity and Physique had gained +1 each. Everything was going great. Luo Yuan comforted Wen Yujie, "Don't worry, everything will get better. Maybe we will be able to leave this place soon."

...

By their fifth day in the prison, Luo Yuan could move slowly, but not stand up yet. Only then did he manage to see the cell clearly. The room was overwhelmingly small. It was not even five square meters. Apart from the bunk bed and the two mattresses, there was nothing else in it. There wasn't even a washroom, only a wooden spittoon in the corner.

It was hard for Luo Yuan to imagine a virgin like Wen Yujie using the spittoon in the presence of a man she did not know.

"Such a naive girl!" Luo Yuan sighed. He felt like he owed her so much.

That day, Luo Yuan's Will showed signs of concentrating. This

time he tried to control himself and avoid passing out, but he failed. He was exhausted. Later that night, he tried again and succeeded.

He calmed himself down and looked at the panel carefully. The condition of his body was bad. A small portion of his cells were dead, and the rest of his body was dehydrated. His looked pale, and most of his blood vessels were clogged, while some parts were bruised. It was a miracle that he was still alive. Although the panel could not show his brain's condition, it was safe to assume that it was not doing well either.

Luo Yuan checked once more before he started the healing process. It was very difficult for him to remain in a state that allowed him to concentrate his Will. He had to set priorities though. As the channel that sent nutrients to his body, his heart and blood vessels were crucial for his metabolism, so they had to be his first priority.

His Will was like an invisible giant hand healing his blood vessels. It was very effective. This was mainly because Luo Yuan always used his Will to train his body, so the cells that were messed up were nicely tidied up by his Will. The healing was slightly imprinted in his system, which gave him an unimaginable power to control his physical body, resulting in less Will consumption for him.

His weak heart starting pumping faster, and the dull blood vessel walls became elastic and bright again. Numerous clogged blood vessels were unclogged. Before this, his physique had not been human-like, so it would not be an exaggeration to say that he was a

green level super-lifeform.

Under the intense pumping of his heart, his blood flowed like a river with a swishing sound. A large amount of nutrients that were kept inside his body were broken down and, combined with his blood, they were sent to every part of his body. Even his capillaries were functioning smoothly.

Although the effect was not as efficient as using his Will, his fatally injured body had regained life. However, this was still too slow for Luo Yuan. There was a limit to his everyday consumption of Will. Each time it was only enough to fix something partially. Judging by the damage, Luo Yuan would need five days to recover, excluding the damage in his brain. But then again, what he lacked the most was time. Nobody knew what was going to happen next. He had to prepare for the worst, and he did not want to leave his life to fate or some evil plan or spontaneous idea.

After his blood vessels and heart were fixed, he used his remaining Will to control his heart rate. His heart started to beat slower, and soon Luo Yuan was able to feel the Earth Pulse. The Earth Pulse had existed for many years and left a heavy, majestic trace over time. It felt like it was deep in the ground and everywhere at the same time.

A system notification popped up in Luo Yuan's head.

"Realization of the Earth Pulse: In this state, you will gain extra strength. Ability 1: Untiring Stamina; Ability 2: Super Healing. It will consume your Sensory Perception in the process until it is completely exhausted."



Luo Yuan slowly opened his eyes, which were dim, yet calm. His pale face was blushing.

"What... What happened to you?" Wen Yujie stammered in shock as he struggled to sit up. Luo Yuan looked like he was suffering from terminal lucidity.

"Help me get down from the bed," Luo Yuan said calmly. He thought lying on the bed would prevent him from executing the Earth Pulse to the fullest.

Wen Yujie tried to say something, but she could not utter a word. She ran to Luo Yuan immediately.

When she touched his arm, she was shocked to discover that his body was scarily warm. His heart was pounding like a beating drum, and although there was a layer of clothes on him, she could still feel his strong power clearly.

Luo Yuan stood up and stumbled, almost falling to the floor. Wen Yujie, who had not been paying attention, was shocked, but she helped him up immediately. As an evolved person, she was naturally stronger than the average girl. Although Luo Yuan was almost 90 kilos, she could pick him up without breaking a sweat. However, standing next to Luo Yuan, who was 180 centimeters, Wen Yujie, who was not even 165 centimeters, looked like a little girl. Their bodies were leaning against each other as she blushed.

Luo Yuan had evolved to the highest point, so there was an extra

charming vibe to him that naturally attracted attention. However, Luo Yuan remained calm. He looked in front of him, staring into the empty space. He remained on the spot, not moving at all as his breathing slowed down.

He slowly removed his hands from Wen Yujie's arm and asked her to back away from him.

Wen Yujie hesitated. At his persistence, she took a few steps back, ready to support him if she needed to. Without her support, Luo Yuan's body shook at first, but he managed to stand still eventually. Ever since he had gained +1 in his Sensory Perception, his Earth Pulse had become level-5, its effect becoming more than twice as powerful. He could feel a boundless, unimaginable power beneath him, as well as his body healing rapidly. Luo Yuan let out a breath and tried to move forward.

## Chapter 283: Find Him

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One step, two steps. Luo Yuan was moving as slow as an old person at first, but he was gradually getting faster and faster, his movements becoming more sturdy. After a few minutes, he could walk like a normal person again, the pain in his body subsiding rapidly. His brain, which felt like it had been clogged, started to clear up. Suddenly, he felt like he was shedding off a heavy armor and getting back his freedom.

However, that did not last long.

Soon, the exhaustion of his Sensory Perception made him dizzy. His body was detached from the Earth Pulse, and his emotions came back accompanied by fatigue and pain. Luo Yuan felt lost.

It took him a while to snap back to reality, but he slowly sat down at the corner of the bed. He turned on the system attributes panel right away. The Earth Pulse's healing was super effective. Although it lasted less than half an hour, all his attributes had recovered fully. Both his Strength and Dexterity had gained +1 each, while the rest had reached +8. If he were to add the bonus of his Earth based abilities, his Physique would go as high as +13. However, bonus attributes were not an upgrade on his intrinsic abilities. In a certain context, he could be given a bonus; for instance, the halo in games. Besides the enhancement of his stamina though, it had no other effect on his recovery.

Most importantly, the concentration of his Will remained obscure, although not as torturous as before. His Sensory Perception was spreading naturally like mercury flowing on the

floor, but due to exhaustion, it could only be maintained at a six-meter radius. If nothing else, at least this meant that his brain was recovering at lightning speed.

There was no price to pay for such powerful self-healing. What it took was only a massive amount of nutrients and energy. Luo Yuan felt hungrier than he ever had, and a part of the energy nucleus near his heart was used. It was the energy enrichment he had extracted from the snake, which could support him twice as much.

"This should be enough!" Luo Yuan thought to himself as he clenched his fists, feeling the energy growing inside his body.

There was a knock at the door, and a basin full of steamed buns and a big bowl of water were shoved through the small window under the door. Wen Yujie snapped out of her daydream and placed the food on the ground before Luo Yuan. She picked up a bun, squatted in a corner of the cell, and started eating it. There were tears rolling down her cheeks, but she kept eating.

Luo Yuan thought her being emotional during such a moment was ridiculous. "What is there to cry about?"

Hearing what Luo Yuan had asked her made Wen Yujie lose control of her tears.

"I just... I don't want to talk you, you liar!" she said hatefully while still crying.

She hadn't had a good rest those past few days, especially during the days Luo Yuan had been spiking a high fever. Every day she'd had to wipe his body more than 10 times. She'd even had to do it at night. Sometimes she would try to catch up on her sleep, but then she would hear Luo Yuan telling her that he was thirsty in his sleep and she'd have to feed him. When he had finally awakened and started getting better, she had still been concerned that he could lose his life at any time.

It was his fault for knowing that he had the unique ability to heal, but not saying anything to her. Did he not realize how worried she was about him? She could not stop crying as she thought about all the things she'd had to do for him.

Luo Yuan was stunned. He turned to Wen Yujie and told her apologetically, "Actually, there were certain conditions that had to be met for me to heal like I did. It's not like I enjoyed lying in bed doing nothing. Thank you for taking care of me though."

Sensing that there was a boundary in his tone, the girl's sensitive heart was hurt. Wen Yujie turned cold as she said, "I don't need to hear that. I would have done this for anyone."

...

Since then, Luo Yuan could sense that Wen Yujie was being cold to him. Although he realized it, he did not say anything. He knew that he had a complicated love life, not only with Huang Jiahui and Zhao Yali, but even with Wang Shishi. Wang Xiaoguang had been hurt so bad that she did not even want to be friends with him anymore. He really should not be planting any more seeds of love.

Plus, he was now behind bars and unsure of what would happen to him, so he was not in the mood to invest in a relationship.

After dinner, Luo Yuan put this behind him. He lay down on his bed, closed his eyes and prepared to meditate to speed up the healing of his Sensory Perception and Will. His meditation was not limited to one position. He could do it sitting or lying down. Not long later, he closed his eyes, and all the thoughts in his mind quieted down.

Wen Yujie stared hatefully at Luo Yuan, who was sleeping like a pig right after eating his dinner. She got into her own bed and just stared into space. She thought she would make a bad impression on him. If she did not explain herself properly, it might cause a misunderstanding between them. On the other hand, she was worried that she was being too cold to him and he might think that she was angry with him. Her mind was in complete chaos.

...

Meanwhile, in the other room, there were cigarette butts everywhere, and smoke was filling the air as if there was a fire.

"The underground cables were cut off recently, and the satellite phones were turned up with the excuse of re-encryption. Due to the electromagnetic storm, the Desert City is now untraceable," a guy in glasses laughed.

Su Yu nodded and said, "Good. At least the civilians won't be affected temporarily. By then, we will be rich and there'll nothing

we'll need to care about."

Su Yu then looked at Lao Xie.

"Oh, the military has been settled. Master Liu is playing along," said Lao Xie as he stood up and tossed his cigarette away. There was a smell of blood on his body. Apparently, the battle would not be a peaceful one.

"What about you, Hawk Eye?" Su Yu said to an average-looking man with a sharp vision.

"The operation in the government department has been going well these past few days. We have handled a few of them who noticed that something was wrong. Oh, it's Shuanggui! We have taken care of anyone who caused trouble!" Hawk Eye joked with a frown.

Everyone burst out laughing, but Su Yu was frowning. It was the first time he lacked any talented men. Except for a couple of them, the rest were all talk. Su Yu banged on the table. "Now let's talk about the evolved people who were captured. Lao Xie, did anybody escape recently?"

"There's a soldier doing rounds near the prison day and night, and those who were unwilling to submit were all killed. None of them would dare escape now," Lao Xie said arrogantly. Killing was a major privilege to him. It had been his obsession ever since he had become a martial arts coach before the apocalypse.

"Although it was a little cruel, it showed them how powerful we are and that they need to listen. Things would be so much easier if Sister Mo's hypnosis was effective on evolved people," Su Yu said. Suddenly, he seemed to think of something. "Speed up the investigation on the evolved people that are still out there among the civilians. I don't want the same thing happening again."

As he concluded, his face was full of bitterness. He had not expected such a small place as the Desert City to have so many powerful evolved people. If it was not for the other party's inexperience in battle, he would have already lost his life.

"I suspect that there's a mole in the Desert City, otherwise it would not have taken us so long to take care of this," the guy in the glasses said seriously while pushing up his glasses.

"Let them go on with the investigation and tighten the food control. One day they will not be able to take it anymore and they will show themselves," Su Yu said.

Suddenly, the meeting room door was pushed open, and Sister Mo walked in without acknowledging anyone. She took out a document and said, "We are in trouble!"

Su Yu took the document and looked at it, mumbling to himself, "Luo Yuan!"

Then he said in a deadly tone, "Get him now!"



...

In the middle of the night, Luo Yuan was lying in bed with his eyes open. The cell was in complete darkness as he slowly sat up, feeling for his Zhanmadao. He had been meditating just now, so his sensitivity was high enough for him to feel where the Zhanmadao was. After imprinting it with Will over long periods of time, the sword had been imprinted with his spirit. As long as it was not too far away from him, he could sense it clearly. He could even use the remaining imprinted Will to sense what was happening nearby. Of course, things were not exactly clear. The best he could do was sense if there were any big obstacles near him. Ever since his brain damage, he had not been feeling at the top of his game though. As a result, he had not been able to sense much until now. Things were only just starting to become clear again.

He sensed that his Zhanmadao was not too far. It was approximately 600 meters to 1,000 meters away. He was hesitating to summon it though. The Zhanmadao had become a part of his body now. It was in his blood. He had taken extra time to cultivate it when he'd arrived at the Desert City. He could now move the sword with his mind, but his speed was slow, unlike the terrifying impact of the 'flying sword' in the myth. However, it was still good enough for him to summon the sword. All he had to do was think about it, and the Zhanmadao would come to him.

However, after thinking about it, he gave up on the urge to summon it. Now that his body was not completely healed, there was no use. Plus, it could trigger some kind of danger or unpredictable incident. Luo Yuan regained his calm, concentrated his Will, and started to heal his body.

...

The next morning, as soon as the lights in the prison were turned on, Luo Yuan opened his eyes. His body was itching after using the Earth Pulse to heal in the middle of the night. It bothered him immensely, but he wanted to see what was happening to his body. Wen Yujie, who had been sleeping on the top bunk, was waking up as well.

Luo Yuan said immediately, "Please wait, I'm taking my clothes off!"

"Okay!" Wen Yujie replied shyly before she lay down on her bed again.

Luo Yuan's sword, wallet, clothes, and equipment had not been confiscated when he had been caught. Luo Yuan was relieved to see that he was wearing his own clothes.

In fact, he had plenty of equipment on him. On the outside, he was wearing Levitating Sports Wear, a dark-blue piece of equipment made using Storm Bird Feathers. Although its ranking was not high and it did not look extraordinary on Luo Yuan, its unique Airflow Balancing ability was the reason he'd kept it with him until now.

On the inside, he was wearing a green-level bulletproof armor made of Archelon Egg Colloid with anti-damaging and energy-absorbing effects. His undergarment was the latest Plasma Undergarment, another green-level piece of equipment with an

angled shield made of a Green Hidden Person's Sharp Horn and a Haunted Locust Heart with its own special functions.

Luo Yuan took off his clothes and found out what was causing him the itch. There was dead skin all over his body, looking like layers of scales. The layers looked like they were one size bigger, and the sight of them gave him goosebumps. The dead skin consisted of almost all the dead cells in his body. As his body slowly recovered and regained its normal physique, the dead skin was shed by his metabolism.

Luo Yuan tried to peel off the dead skin, making a sound similar to a piece of cloth being torn. The dead skin was tough, but the limitations of human nature made its defense weaker than that of mutated beasts. However, the dead skin shed by Luo Yuan's +14 Physique body was comparable to a light-green level creature's fur. Luo Yuan carried on tearing it, soon getting exhausted.

His strength had not fully recovered yet, so he was only slightly stronger than the average person. It was completely incomparable to when he was at the top of his game. Luo Yuan was panting and staring at his body, which looked like it was suffering from some kind of skin disease. There was nothing he could do. He actually found it funny. He was not sure if he should be proud of himself or laugh at himself. He did not even have the strength to hurt himself right now. He was almost there though. Two more sessions of healing and he would have fully recovered. When the time came, this tiny shell would not be able to contain him anymore.

## Chapter 284: Violent Battle (I)

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Just as Luo Yuan was done putting on his clothes, someone knocked hard on the door.

"Spot check! Everybody put your hands on your heads and get on the ground! This is not a warning, it's an order! I repeat, everybody put your hands on your heads and get on the ground..."

Shocked, Wen Yujie, who had been lying on her bed, jumped down immediately. She had her clothes on all the time, because she had been rooming with a man she was unfamiliar with, but Luo Yuan was still taking his time putting on his shoes.

"Be quick! These soldiers are not friendly, they might really open fire!"

Luo Yuan's heart was pounding, and his blood was flowing through his entire body, his face flushing red. When he was finally done with his shoes, he had to calm himself down.

"Prepare yourself, we're going out."

"Nine, eight, seven..." the soldiers outside were counting down.

"What are you talking about? Have you lost your mind? Stay on the ground with me!"

Wen Yujie tried to get Luo Yuan to squat down by pulling on his arm. Luo Yuan, who had been weak earlier, had his feet planted on the floor. She could not move him, no matter how hard she tried.

"...Six, five, four..."

"Didn't you keep asking me who I am?" Luo Yuan turned around and asked her.

"...Three, two, one..."

There was a magnificent invisible aura surrounding him. Wen Yujie's anxiety was gone, but her heart was beating fast as she asked, "So who are you?"

"Luo Yuan!" Luo Yuan was grinning, but his eyes were cold.

The door was pushed open with a bang, and a team of soldiers stormed inside the cell. After glancing around them, one of them said, "Everybody get ready..."

Before the soldier could even finish his sentence though, a terrifying vibe started spreading around the tiny space.

The bodies of the soldiers shook, and their expressions went stiff as they all fell down. Their eyes looked empty as if the fire in their spirits had been put off.

It was the first time Luo Yuan had used his force field to attack a human, and the effect was better than he'd imagined. He would normally have felt sad for them, but he did not experience any emotion now. What was left was only his cold sensibility.

Wen Yujie turned pale as her mind went blank. She was shocked by Luo Yuan's force. She had not seen that murderous action coming, and she did not know how to react.

Luo Yuan picked up a gun, took the bullets in his hand and threw it away. He pulled Wen Yujie to him and walked out of the cell between all the dead bodies. Some soldiers who were doing their rounds at the corner realized that something was wrong. As they were about to shoot, Luo Yuan threw the Tungsten core bullets at them. The bullets flew towards the soldiers at the speed of light, hitting them and causing them to drop dead on the floor.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan stopped walking. He stood right where he was and extended his arm. His Zhanmadao floated towards him from the end of the tunnel. Within seconds, it had landed on Luo Yuan's hand. Although he was sensible, holding the sword that had been with him since the beginning of the apocalypse caused a smile to form on his face.

A few steps later, the alarm was ringing throughout the entire prison area.

It was an area under major surveillance, so anything unusual would be captured on the cameras that were mounted everywhere. It was impossible to escape unnoticed.

Of course, Luo Yuan knew that escaping would not be easy. However, the energy from the Earth was reaching him boundlessly from beneath him, his body recovering rapidly and his powerful strength returning to his body.

Amid the noise of the alarm, Luo Yuan's sharp ears could pick up the sound of many people heading in his direction at a fast pace. He knew that he was surrounded.

"Hide!" Luo Yuan turned around and told Wen Yujie, who was still in shock. He used his sword to slice open the gate across from him. Ignoring the confused prisoners, he pushed her inside the cell.

"No, Luo Yuan, don't act impulsively! You need to live!" Wen Yujie told him loudly as she snapped out of it.

Luo Yuan left with a blank expression on his face. Gripping his sword firmly, he ran faster and faster along the 10-meter long tunnel. Suddenly, he took a light leap, his body flying eight meters across the tunnel like a bird. Pointing his feet at the wall, he managed to land among the soldiers. One of them did not even get a chance to take a good look at him before he was struck by his force. His mouth started foaming and he passed out, yet Luo Yuan was nowhere to be seen.

The shelter's layout was complicated. There were tunnels everywhere, and all aisles and rooms looked the same. It was easy to get lost in there without any obvious signage or map. However,

Luo Yuan figured out where the exit was by recalling where the sound of the soldiers' footsteps had been coming from. The space in the shelter had to be limited and the prison could not be too big, because after less than two minutes of running, Luo Yuan arrived at the exit.

He slowed down his pace when he saw someone familiar.

"So you're Luo Yuan? The only level-5 evolved person in the Desert City?" Lao Xie said as he laughed. "Who would have thought that you'd use to stay next to me! We had a hard time looking for you!"

Luo Yuan walked up to him, remaining expressionless.

As he watched Luo Yuan walk towards him, Lao Xie's smile disappeared. Luo Yuan was an officially recognized evolved person, so Lao Xie had to be extra careful. Although there was a rumor that he had been badly injured, it was better to see it with his eyes. From what he saw, there seemed to be nothing wrong with Luo Yuan.

"There's no need for us to fight. We can talk..." said Lao Xie with a grin.

"Stop wasting my time, I'll kill all of you right now," Luo Yuan said calmly.

Lao Xie looked at the ceiling quietly. The guy with the glasses was



crawling on it, ready to ambush Luo Yuan without even waiting for the perfect time. Lao Xie let out a roar. His muscles started bulging and he grew taller all of a sudden. What was even more strange though, was that there was a layer of oil shining on his skin.

Lao Xie stomped hard on the ground, creating a deep hole on the concrete floor before he lunged towards Luo Yuan like a cannon ball. Luo Yuan remained right where he was. When the guy with the glasses jumped down, he took a step back right away. Waving his right hand, a shadow suddenly started shaking and a fan-shaped glow formed at the top of it.

Against Luo Yuan's expectations, the guy with the glasses was not slow to react. As soon as he was aware of the danger, he folded his body into a ball. With the help of his core muscles, he flung himself up into the air and stayed there for 0.1 seconds. He managed to escape Luo Yuan's attack and land on the ground elegantly. His weapon was a pair of claws made of metal, painted with a layer of Antiaris poison extracted from a level-5 creature's teeth. The claws complemented his extraordinary agility and flexibility, giving him a ghostly vibe.

Luo Yuan frowned, His body had not been fully recovered yet, so his physical attributes were only at +13 or +14. As a result, he had missed. Just as the guy with the glasses landed, Lao Xie, who had turned into a hunk, came his way. He was like a terrifying giant dragon. A strong wind was produced, even before he had started to attack. He seemed to have gone through some kind of tough Kung Fu training that must have given him that astounding strength.

However, Luo Yuan could see many flaws on him. Although his physical attributes were not at their peak, his vision was clear, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that he was a martial arts master. Luo Yuan moved his head out of the way to avoid Lao Xie's punch. At the same time, he grabbed Lao Xie's hair and tried to stab his temple.

Contrary to expectation, his sharp Zhanmadao, which could kill a green-level creature, was useless. The tip of the sword was blocked by the layer of oil on Lao Xie's skin. Luo Yuan remained calm as he tried to stab Lao Xie's waist, head and spine before kicking him away.

"This all you got? This is too weak, it seems like I overestimated you!" Lao Xie laughed as he took a few steps back. He was still standing firmly on the ground. There were no injuries on him at all.

Luo Yuan was left speechless by Lao Xie's shocking defense. He knew that it was impossible for Lao Xie to be this strong. There had to be some kind of loophole that he was not aware of. While he was still thinking, the guy with the glasses and Lao Xie ran towards him. Lao Xie blocked Luo Yuan's way while the guy with the glasses walked around him, looking for Luo Yuan's weakness.

The two of them made a perfect team, as one of them was powerful, strong and bright, and the other was agile, light and dark. Even a level-5 creature could get killed by them if it was careless. That was why they had the confidence to fight Luo Yuan. Luo Yuan tried to attack again, but the journey before him was still unpredictable, and he did not want to waste his Will on them. He

avoided their attack, using the lightning speed of the Zhanmadao to chop Lao Xie's throat, eyes, and crotch. He even tried to cut his anus. Once again, the sword could not go through the layer of oil. There were only ripples, but no wounds.

Lao Xie endured Luo Yuan's continuous attacks, no more able to defend himself than a kid. He roared in anger and embarrassment before he opened his mouth. There was a glaring light shining from within it. Lao Xie's pupils were shrinking fast, and he tried to close his mouth quickly, but it was too late. Before he could close it, the sword had pierced through his cheek. He might not have lost his life if he'd avoided a direct attack.

## Chapter 285: Violent Battle (II)

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The battle between Luo Yuan and Lao Xie was a tight one. Concerned, the guy with the glasses, who was standing aside, jumped forward and tried to gnaw at Luo Yuan with his fishy claws. He was fast, so it did not take him long to reach Luo Yuan, who was only four meters away. Feeling his claws touch Luo Yuan's clothes, the man smiled. No matter how powerful an evolved person was, a drop of Antiaris poison could kill them instantly and turn them into a puddle of water.

Suddenly, Luo Yuan retracted his sword, turned around and slashed into the air. There was a fan-like glow as time seemed to freeze. The guy with the glasses went stiff. He could not move his body at all. He let out a forced smile as a long bloody cut appeared on his face, spreading all the way down to his waist. His body was sliced into half and glided slowly to the ground.

"No!" Lao Xie screamed in devastation. His face was filled with blood, cut into half horizontally as Luo Yuan retracted his sword. Blood and flesh were flowing out, making for a gory sight. Luo Yuan shook his head as he said calmly, "I have wasted too much time."

Lao Xie let out a lunatic laugh and roared like a beast, "You killed Zhou Wen! You are dead, Boss will never let you go!"

Luo Yuan looked at him expressionlessly. "It's your turn now."

Terrified, Lao Xie took a few steps back.

He had underestimated Luo Yuan's ability at first, but as time passed, his power seemed to be growing like a rocket. Although Lao Xie had managed to defend himself at first, a few seconds later, his defense system started to break down. The strength of Luo Yuan's attacks was getting more and more intense, and Lao Xie's body started to ache. Luo Yuan's power was rising like there was no limit to it.

Lao Xie knew very well that his defense was not unlimited, although he had the ability to divert one's attack to a nearby area. By expanding the area force was applied on, he could minimize the pressure on a particular area. This made him fearless against bullets, guns, and swords. No matter how sharp or powerful they were, fighting them only felt like scratching an itch for him. Before the purge of the evolved people, he had managed to escape from the campsite by using that ability of his. However, his ability still did not allow him to handle big mutated beasts. Attacks from such beasts could destroy his defense immediately. Plus, it could not defend him against artillery. Such an attack could crush him into pieces.

While Lao Xie was distracted by what Luo Yuan had said, Luo Yuan dragged his Zhanmadao and walked towards him. His speed was so fast that he turned into a shadow. He held his sword with both hands and stomped hard on the floor. Power was transferred from the tips of his toes to his waist, spine, arms, and eventually to the tip of his sword. By the time Lao Xie snapped out of his thoughts, the sword was already right in front of him. He tried to defend himself by crossing his arms, but the tip of the sword was already touching the skin of his forehead.

Within 0.1 seconds, the layer of oil was broken and spilled from the back of his head. Lao Xie was stunned, his eyes filling with anger. He wanted to curse Luo Yuan, but before he could, Luo Yuan proceeded to attack him again. This time, Lao Xie's ability had no effect whatsoever. His head was sliced by the sword and plunged out of his body towards the ceiling. Blood was flowing as he shook uncontrollably, and soon his enormous body collapsed onto the floor.

Luo Yuan stood where he was, blood dripping from the tip of his sword to the ground. It looked brand new again. The remaining soldiers who were stationed at the prison rushed to the scene. Before they could even see Luo Yuan's face, they were hit by his force and passed out on the floor. Suddenly, the prison was defenseless.

Luo Yuan opened the cell gates one by one, letting the evolved people break out of the prison. Some of them were grateful and some ran straight away, while others cursed him, unwilling to leave their cells. The government's authority had not weakened after the apocalypse. Most of them knew that something strange was going on, but none of them dared do anything, afraid that they would get sentenced. Of course, there were some who wanted to prove themselves by fighting Luo Yuan, but looking at the gory scene along the tunnel, none of them dared even say anything.

Not long after reuniting with Wen Yujie, Luo Yuan found Xu Zhiqiang's cell. Having been crowned the leader of the rebellion, he had been given special treatment. His cell was low, shallow, and completely dark. He could only sit in it. He couldn't stand up at all. Of course, the defensive measures were even stronger, but Luo Yuan slashed the gate open easily with his sword.

It had only been a few days, but Xu Zhiqiang already looked haggard. When the gate was opened, he backed off deeper into the room, but when he saw it was Luo Yuan, his eyes sparkled with hope.

"Mr. Luo, I knew those injuries were nothing for you!" he said weakly.

"Let's get out, we'll talk later."

"Right, let's go!" Xu Zhiqiang stood up trembling.

They found Xiao Baihong and Shen Jixing in a cell nearby. They did not waste much time, leaving the prison area fast. Wen Yujie was hesitant at first, as she was not sure if a prison break was the right thing to do. Looking at Luo Yuan's expressionless face though, she did not dare say anything. She had no choice but to escape with them.

Seeing them running away, some of the evolved people followed them as well. After all, breaking out of the prison was not the end of the story. The most crucial part was avoiding getting captured again.

"Where are we going?" Xu Zhiqiang asked Luo Yuan as they ran.

It seemed like a simple question, but it wasn't. By asking that, Xu Zhiqiang was basically surrendering the leadership to Luo Yuan

and choosing a side.

"Where else can we go? Let's just finish them all in one go!" Xiao Baihong said loudly. He had been furious ever since hearing the news.

"Do you know who the brain behind this rebellion is? Who the members are? What their abilities and military strength is? Nonsense! Who do you want to finish in one go?" Xu Zhiqiang said.

"I think it should not be that hard..." Xiao Baihong said quietly.

"I need to go home. We'll see what we'll do next after checking the conditions at home." Luo Yuan was out of the Earth Pulse mode, so his emotions were coming back to his body. Thinking for a bit, he said, "Of course, you guys could go home too if you want, but please be careful."

Everybody went silent. Although their families were not there with them during the apocalypse, they had formed new families. They could not hide any longer. A prison break was big news, especially a mass prison break. Perhaps their homes would now be under major surveillance.

"I'm not going back. My wife is working in Hope City, I don't have anyone here," Xu Zhiqiang said.

"Me neither. The situation won't get any better or worse if I go back," Xiao Baihong said, clenching his teeth.



"Then I'm not going either." Wen Yujie looked desperate as she realized that she was now a fugitive.

"I need to go back, there's nobody to take care of my mother." Shen Jixing thought for a long time before making up his mind, "I'm not following you guys, I'm leaving!" he said and went off right away.

Some of them did not even say anything before leaving, and Luo Yuan did not try to convince them to stay. The Desert City was a small place, and the shelter wasn't even one-fifth of it. Although their bodies were weak, they were evolved people, so their strength was higher than the average person. In 10 minutes, Luo Yuan had reached the warehouse area, where he used to stay.

Maybe he was fast or maybe the enemy's forces has yet to regroup, but Luo Yuan did not come across anyone suspicious along the way. No doubt that was good news. It proved that they still had some privacy and control. In fact, he'd picked up some clues while he'd been fighting Lao Xie. Lao Xie had been shocked to see him, which meant that he had not had access to Luo Yuan's details, photos or address.

Luo Yuan had been looking forward to going home, but his excitement was crushed when he reached his destination. The dorm door was wide open, and there was nobody inside. The blankets were in disarray, and stools were lying everywhere on the floor. The whole room was a mess. Luo Yuan was relieved when he opened the closet. Their luggage and clothes were gone. It did not look like a raid. They must have escaped, otherwise, they wouldn't

have taken their clothes with them.

"Mr. Luo, there's a note!" Xu Zhiqiang had noticed something on a table.

Luo Yuan walked up to him immediately, picked up the note and read, "Don't worry, we're safe!"

There was a drawing at the bottom that looked like a sun and clouds. The handwriting belonged to Huang Jiahui, while the drawing was obviously Wang Shishi's.

It was obvious that the note was meant for him, but what did the drawing mean?

"A sun? Clouds?" Luo Yuan thought to himself, "Could it be their new location? Or does it mean something special?"

"Is there anywhere to hide in the shelter?" Luo Yuan turned around and asked the people who had followed him.

"Although the shelter looks enormous, most of it is occupied by warehouses, and the rest is filled with people. There's nowhere to hide," Xu Zhiqiang thought before he said, "The only places where one could hide would be the exhaust pipes and the sewer. If we were to hide for a long time, we'd need to think about food and drinking water though. The food is given out according to headcount in the shelter, so our only choice would be the sewer."

The location and images did not seem to be related. Perhaps the drawing was just a scribble that meant nothing. Luo Yuan stopped thinking about it and asked Xu Zhiqiang, "The sewer? Maybe there's water there, but what about food? Do you mean...?" he tried to guess.

"That's right! The sewer is used by both the Desert City and the shelter. The environment is damp and the domestic sewage is heavy, so there are many big underground creatures living there. Before the crypt worm tide, the military would clean it almost every month. The last time they cleaned it was less than two weeks ago."

Luo Yuan's eyes brightened up. The continuous use of the Earth Pulse had exhausted his nucleus and the remaining conserved energy in his body. Suddenly, he felt both mentally exhausted and famished. He could even eat a cow if there was one in front of him.

"Let's go there!" he decided immediately.

## Chapter 286: Under the Sewer (I)

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Not long after Luo Yuan and the gang had left, a loud noise was heard around the prison. It sounded like an explosion, and dust was suddenly flying everywhere. Amid the hazy smoke, a glowing man appeared. His entrance was magnificent, but what was unbelievable was that he was actually floating in the air.

Upset, Su Yu rushed to the scene as soon as he heard the news. It was too late though. Two dead bodies lay miserably on the ground, and so were countless soldiers, although he was not sure whether they were dead or alive.

"Such garbage!" Su Yu said coldly. Their deaths meant nothing to him. Ever since he had decided to walk the journey of hegemony, he had long pushed his emotions aside. During the apocalypse, only those cruel and ruthless enough survived.

"They were still my dogs though. A level-5 evolved person might be strong, but they're still nothing compared to me. You're not getting away from me, Luo Yuan!"

...

The shelter was located underground, so there was no drainage or covers needed. There were only two ways to reach it. One was by using the tunnel meant for maintenance, and the other was by using the pipelines under the toilet bowls. The latter was naturally out of the question. Filth aside, the pipelines were too shallow and small for a human body to move in. This way they would not just

be seen easily, but also endanger their lives by coming into contact with the stuff being flushed down the pipelines. They were all either serving in the military or on reserve, so even Wen Yujie had to attend military training once a week every month. Her actions were quick, and once she made a decision, she never procrastinated.

The wanted list was not out yet, so nobody recognized them, although they came across many people along the way. Luo Yuan was relieved. After all, he did not want to kill people just like that. The sewer maintenance room was coincidentally located 100 meters away from the campsite. It was in the danger zone, so it was always one of the major caution areas. Since it was close to the campsite, if anything were to happen, it could be fixed in no time.

The entrance of the campsite was heavily guarded. There were guards whistling nearby, so there was no way for them to get in. It was impossible not to get caught if they tried to sneak in just like that.

"I didn't expect the security measures to be so strict here. There were only four guards last time. I think they know me though. Let me talk to them!" Xu Zhiqiang said.

"No, you're on the wanted list now! Plus, you're listed as the leader of the rebellion. Ordinary people may not know who you are, but these people will know for sure. They'll kill you if you go in just like that," Luo Yuan said. Sighing, he added, "Let me do it!"

It was the only way. They had to get closer so that Luo Yuan could pressure the guards with his power. Otherwise, they would

have to retreat. Luo Yuan did not underestimate the power of modern weapons. He was not even thinking about large-scale ones, even the new rifles terrified him. His +15 Physique could be used to block bullets, but not armor-piercing bullets, which were twice as fast. The reason he could easily defeat any soldier in the campsite was that he had the advantage of understanding the location where they were at as well as having sufficient information. If he did not have those, he would have been shot even before he could get close enough. With his abilities as an elusive assassin, he could basically kill anyone he wanted. However, provoking the military would be a dead end for him. That was also why Luo Yuan had decided to withdraw, even though he'd just gotten out of prison.

"That's too dangerous, let me do it," said Wen Yujie.

"You..." Luo Yuan wanted to reject her initially, but remembering that she was also an evolved person, he asked, "Do you have the confidence to do it?"

"I can control light. Although the damage is not very significant, I could still trick their eyes. If they don't look in our direction, I have an 80% chance of succeeding," Wen Yujie said proudly. "I'll need a little time though."

"Enough!" Xiao Baihong said immediately. "Let me handle the lock after you've done your part."

He was a metal based evolved human, so he could manipulate locks. Unlocking them was a piece of cake for him. He could grasp the technique to unlock the locks as long as he had a chance to experiment a few times.

Suddenly, a big group of soldiers swamped out of the door, leaving the campsite as fast as they could. Luo Yuan counted silently. There was more than a thousand of them. He knew something was wrong. "How long more do you need?" he asked

"Not long, but we should stay together!"

Luo Yuan turned around, only to realize that there was sweat dripping down Wen Yujie's forehead. They did not need to be reminded by Luo Yuan to put Wen Yujie in the limelight and support her.

"We can go now," said Wen Yujie with a frown. There seemed to be no change in their surroundings as they walked towards the entrance anxiously. After a few steps though, the images before them suddenly started coming closer to them at a fast pace.

"What's happening? Is it my eyes?" Xiao Baihong sounded shocked.

"It should be the light refraction. Objects before us are pulled closer, while their vision is pulled further away. Although we're moving closer now, to them, we're still standing where we were," Luo Yuan said after estimating their distance and speed.

Wen Yujie was focused on controlling the light, but her eyes were sparkling with hope. The effect of her refraction was amazing. Luo Yuan noticed that some of the soldiers were looking in their direction, but they could not see them. It was as if they did not

exist. Humans could see thanks to the reflection of light, so by controlling light, one could control another person's vision and have them see what they wanted them to see. If this ability was included in the system, although there would be no direct damage, it would allow Luo Yuan to trick someone or even create illusions.

As they got closer to the sewer maintenance room, Luo Yuan noticed that Wen Yujie was sweating even more and her face was turning pale. Apparently, that level of light control was the extent of her abilities. When they were about 10 meters away, her body started swaying and she was soaked in sweat. Although she looked soft, there was an extraordinary perseverance to her. While everyone else was worried about her, she insisted on finishing what she'd started.

Xiao Baihong unlocked the door, and they went in, closing the door silently. Exhausted, Wen Yujie leaned on Luo Yuan. The maintenance room was spacious. From the look of it, it had to be at least a few hundred square meters. There was no furniture though. It was empty for the convenience of the troops coming in and out. There was only a ladder in a corner connected to the underground. Six meters into the room was a stainless steel door. Xiao Baihong opened an electric box near him, pushing the start button. With a hydraulic jet sound, the stainless steel door opened.



## Chapter 287: Under The Sewer (II)

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As they were getting into the sewer, Luo Yuan heard an uproar. There were several unknown creatures scurrying at their feet, some even trying to go up their pants.

"Ahh!" Wen Yujie screamed.

The sewer was dark, and there was no source of light at all. Luo Yuan's low light vision was unclear. Under such circumstances, anyone would have been afraid. Even Luo Yuan felt a chill in his body as he turned his forcefield on and off. Although the force was not strong, the creatures at their feet were still running around like there was a natural disaster.

The crisp sound of a lighter was heard, and a dim flame pierced through the darkness. An evolved person standing at the back was providing the only source of light in the sewer. Apart from Luo Yuan and the gang, there were only three other people following them.

One of them was Yang Zhiguang, a middle-aged man who looked upset. It seemed like he had been through a lot in his life. The joints of his fingers were thick, and his skin was rough. Perhaps he'd had a tough life before the apocalypse.

There was also a man called Zhang Wu, who was small in size. He was barely 160 centimeters tall, but he gave the impression that he was strong and should not be underestimated. Luo Yuan had seen his power before, and it was unique. During a battle, he could grow

a third eye on his forehead, although Luo Yuan was not sure what it was for.

The last man was called Tong Jianliang, and he had a beard that covered half of his face. Judging by his appearance, it was hard to estimate how old he was. He was the one who had lit the lighter.

The sewer was not as filthy as they'd imagined, The water in the pipe was shallow, so it did not even cover their soles. The sewer was located in the desert, so it hardly rained, and the strict water control had caused a major drop in domestic sewage. Furthermore, the massive amounts of micro-organisms digested the bacteria as soon as they appeared, so there were not a lot of them left.

Besides the strange smell, the sewer was very different from what Luo Yuan had imagined. Not only was it a bed for micro-organisms, but there were also countless other creatures living here. From various bugs from the bottom of the food chain to small and medium sized mutated creatures, the sewer was almost a complete underground ecosystem.

They met all sorts of mutated creatures along the way. The sewer was cleaned often, so the creatures' abilities were not strong at all. It was rare to see any light blue level creatures, and there were no blue level creatures whatsoever.

"Why are there so many snakes here?" Xiao Baihong asked Yang Zhiguang, who cut off the head of an arm-sized snake that was blocking their way. Yang Zhiguang placed it on his arm. That was not the only snake on his arm though. He was carrying three more poisonous snakes of different colors. They could already tell that

there were lots of snakes in the sewer.

"There are usually lots of snakes, mice, scorpions, and millipedes in the sewers. Anyway, there are many poisonous things here," Xu Zhiqiang said expressionlessly.

Xiao Baihong heard what Xu Zhiqiang had said and asked Yang Zhiguang curiously, "Lao Yang, I see that you're an expert at catching snakes. How do you do it?"

Luo Yuan was curious too. All along the way, no matter how fast the snakes had attacked them, they had not been able to escape Yang Zhiguang.

"I was a farmer. I didn't have any skills, and I didn't want to work in a factory, so when I was free, I would capture snakes and sell them. That's how I learned how to catch them," Yang Zhiguang said while shaking his head and forcing a smile.

...

Not long later, they stopped at a dry place where the terrain was higher. They peeled the skin of the mutated creatures they'd captured along the way, extracted the fat, and started a fire. The fat of the mutated creatures was abundant and was flammable. The strong fragrance covered the stench of the sewer.

Luo Yuan removed a snake skin that had been hanging on his sword and cooked it on the fire. Soon, there was a fragrant oil

dripping from it. Luo Yuan held his hunger in check and continue to cook it. There were many parasites in the sewer. When they were peeling off the skins, they'd noticed that out of 10 creatures, three were filled with parasites. Although they could not be seen with the naked eye, Luo Yuan did not want to test his digestive system.

The white snake meat was soon cooked to golden brown, and Luo Yuan took it down. As first, he tried to be demure, but once he started eating, his hunger was awakened. His stomach was on fire, and he ate clumsily, not caring about his image. Soon, he finished six catties of snake meat. Although his stomach was bloated, he was still hungry. The healing had drained all the energy he had conserved. He had even lost weight, so he needed to replenish his energy.

Unfortunately, the rank of the mutated creatures there was not high. Only a few kilograms of green-level beasts would have sufficed. Luo Yuan thought of the giant bug he had killed and had let go to waste. Although he had gained mission experience, he had gotten no loot from it at all. All he could do now was replenish his energy by eating a big quantity of food.

He rubbed his stomach, using his Will to speed up the digestion process and stimulate the release of gastric acid. Within five minutes, the meat in his stomach was almost completely digested, and Luo Yuan had started eating again. With his method of eating and digesting, he managed to finish a snake weighing more than 10 catties in 20 minutes. He did not stop there though. While everyone was watching in shock, Luo Yuan placed a mutated rat on his Zhanmadao and cooked it on the fire

Although evolved people had a huge appetite, none of them were like Luo Yuan. He spent the whole afternoon shoving food into his mouth. There was not enough food though, so he had to go out twice to capture even more creatures. The rest could not take it anymore and decided to help him with the cooking. He didn't stop eating until his watch showed that it was almost 8 p.m.

In a short period of time, he had consumed almost 300 catties of food. He had to go to the toilet almost 50 times. The terrifying digestion that came with his strong Physique was no joke. He did not feel hungry anymore. Instead, he was feeling warm. His Physique, which had been fluctuating around +14, was now +15, and his recovery was complete.

As he felt his energy reach its full capacity, Luo Yuan's last worry disappeared. He went into a corner, took off his clothes and started tearing off his dead skin. The tough skin did not look like it belonged to a human. Luo Yuan felt a jolt in his heart as the skin started floating and spinning slowly around him. He was surprised to discover that he could connect with his skin just like he did with his Zhanmadao. He had been planning on getting rid of it initially, but now he picked it up and held it carefully.

He suddenly realized that he was not an ordinary person anymore. In the myths, monsters would transform to look like humans, and use their scales as a magic weapon. Their tough scales were harder than steel, but what was even more precious was their connection with them. What he was experiencing now was similar to the stories in legends of old.

Of course, his skin could not be compared to the thick scales of

mutated beasts, but that connection was useful enough. Positioning coordinates alone was worth as much as a green-level material to him. Luo Yuan thought to himself, "I wonder what level my skin is!"

Then he used the identification technique on his dead skin.

## Chapter 288: Under The Sewer (III)

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"Evolved Human's Dead Skin"

"Rarity: Light Green"

"Weight: 30g"

"Additional Abilities: Resistance to Spiritual Attacks"

"Remarks: This is dead skin shed from a powerful evolved human. There is strong Will engraved on it, so it's able to resist certain spiritual attacks."

Human beings were not powerful creatures, so the skin's attributes were just normal. An additional capacity was attached to it, because Luo Yuan had been training his Will frequently. Otherwise, it would not have been anything special. However, Luo Yuan had not expected the system to give him such a high evaluation.

In general, the system would evaluate body parts according to the grade level of the creatures themselves. Whether it was claws as hard as gold, or fragile internal organs, the grade level would always be the same. A light green mutated beast would never have a green level scale. Since his dead skin had been evaluated as light green, this meant that Luo Yuan was already a light green species.

Luo Yuan was slightly surprised. After all, the system did not evaluate things based on the combat level. Instead, evaluations were based on the level of flesh and blood. His recent physical transformation had most likely caused him to reach a grade level comparable to a light green mutated beast.

However, there was nothing beneficial to having such a grade. It would not help in improving his Physique, so Luo Yuan did not think about it any further.

He put the dead skin into his pocket and walked back to the group.

They weren't asleep yet. They were just sitting around the fire, discussing something.

Luo Yuan approached them with a smile. "What are you guys talking about?"

"We're discussing the rebellion. We just talked for a while and discovered that there are a lot of questions," Xu Zhiqiang said.

Still smiling, Luo Yuan sat down around the fire as well. "What questions?"

Xu Zhiqiang sat up slightly and answered seriously, "There are a lot of doubts. First of all, there was not much movement during this rebellion, and it was too peaceful afterward. I did not see any



traces of unrest. It does not make sense, right?"

"Maybe the government forces were stronger, and the opposition did not have enough time to rebel before it was suppressed by the government," Luo Yuan said after thinking for a while.

"Of course, there is that possibility, but this is only one of the questions. Secondly, you were involved in this rebellion, and they knew nothing about it. If it were me, I would have gotten you under control the first time, regardless of what tricks I'd have to use, instead of letting you roam free and become an issue."

"I can answer this. It's because they were not from Desert City. They were the army returning from the battlefield, or probably just some homeless guys," Luo Yuan said, thinking of the two men he had killed.

"This is the best news so far. It means that their base is not strong in Desert City, but it also shows how strong they are. I don't think a few homeless guys could have caused such chaos. And one thing I've always found strange is that their last effort to arrest evolved humans was led by Commander Liu! This does not make any sense. As head of the army, he should have been the first one to get arrested. Instead, he's still in control of the army. I know this guy very well, and he is not someone who wants to be involved in this kind of activity. Lately, he has been trying to move to the mainland, so there was no reason for him to do so!" Xu Zhiqiang paused, his face suddenly turning solemn as he said, "The oddest thing is that he gave me a very strange feeling."

"Did he feel like Peng Guohua?" Xiao Baihong said suddenly.

Xu Zhiqiang's face instantly became ugly. After a long time, he said, "It actually felt a bit like him, but he was not as crazy as Peng Guohua."

Wen Yujie was finally clear on the situation in Motu Town. Worried, she interrupted them by asking, "Could he be disguised?"

"There is no such evidence. However, there are too many things an evolved human could be capable of. Even transforming like a wizard would not be impossible," Xu Zhiqiang said.

"If he had such an ability, then it would be lots of trouble to catch him." Luo Yuan looked dignified. There were almost ten million people in Desert City, so it would be extremely hard to catch someone once they changed their appearance.

"This is not disguising, it's mind control!" Tong Jianliang, who always kept silent, suddenly said.

"How do you know that?" Luo Yuan asked immediately as he looked at him.

"Because I have that ability." His pupils were shining in the darkness. He saw everyone's expression change slightly, so he quickly explained, "It's not what you think. I can only perform offensive mind control, which is similar to me controlling your mind. I'm also quite sensitive towards mind control techniques. In general, regardless of how a human's emotions fluctuate, they are usually in balance and harmony. It would seem that Commander

Liu's mind is in extreme disorder and is mixed with the mind of another individual. It's obvious that he's being controlled."

Everyone's expression changed. Xu Zhiqiang quickly asked, "Could you do something about it?"

Tong Jianliang shook his head, "I'm afraid not. Although we are all spiritual evolved humans, my ability is more inclined to attack. I cannot control another spirit. Plus, the other party is much stronger than I am, so I can't do anything to him."

Luo Yuan's heart trembled. He did not exactly know what spiritual power was. According to his knowledge, spiritual power was a combination of Sensory Perception and Will. Sensory Perception referred to the range and power of mental strength, and Will referred to the nature or quality. Luo Yuan had more than 15 points of Will and Sensory Perception, which meant that his spiritual power was not weak. He just had not learned it through a systematic way and a decent skillset. He had been using it roughly, which had been a waste of potential.

Luo Yuan suddenly asked, "With all due respect, I'm curious about your ability. Could you describe how you form and impact the mind of others?"

Tong Jianliang looked a bit shocked. He thought for a moment before he said, "Mr. Luo, this ability is very simple to me. It's an innate ability. However, people who do not have that ability will find it very difficult, maybe even impossible, to master it. Even if I want to describe it, I can only do so generally."

Everyone's eyes lit up as they listened.

"In general, the spiritual power of ordinary people is divergent. If you want to have a mental impact, first of all, you will need to concentrate and hold your breath. Then you will have to collect all your spiritual power and shrink it into one point before projecting it in the shape of a fan," Zhang Wu said.

"How does spiritual power shrink? How does it get projected? This is too vague, there is no way for us to learn," Xiao Baihong said in confusion.

"I don't know. We are all evolved humans, so you should be able to understand it," Zhang Wu answered with an awkward smile. If he was honest, it was a really big pressure to talk to these powerful evolved people. Otherwise, he would not have been telling them about his own power so candidly.

Xiao Baihong thought about it and agreed with him. He also had the ability to control metal, but he did not know how he did it. It was like an instinct. As soon as he'd evolved, he had been able to control it over night.

No one thought of making an attempt anymore after hearing the explanation. Only Luo Yuan was thinking about it seriously.

His Sensory Perception had been in a state of divergence, but he had never tried to converge or unite it before. Therefore, his Sensory Perception had always been in a fixed state. He had never

known that it could be gathered into a ball and used to attack someone.

It would probably have taken him some time to realize this if he'd never gotten the information from Zhang Wu. He started trying to shrink his Sensory Perception, but unsurprisingly, it was like dead water. It could not move at all.

"Zhang Wu is an expert in this area. He's able to control Sensory Perception just as easily as eating or drinking. When I try to do it, I'm like a human trying to breathe underwater. It's just not possible. But what if I controlled it by using force?" Luo Yuan thought.

After hesitating for a moment, his Will quickly concentrated in the dark, and his eyes suddenly emitted a weak light. This time his Sensory Perception finally made some movement.

Luo Yuan could feel his Sensory Perception range slowly shrinking. The picture that popped into his mind gradually became blurry.

Zhang Wu suddenly raised his head and looked at Luo Yuan in shock. He could not believe it. Other people might not have been aware of Luo Yuan's change, but he was an evolved human in that field, so he was able to sense very clearly all abilities similar to his own.

Before this, he had sensed that his spiritual power had been like stagnant water, but when it was retracted fast, he felt the power

become a wave on a roaring sea, gathering and moving in their direction endlessly.

Originally, he had felt that Luo Yuan's spiritual fluctuation had been obscure and repressed, but he had never expected his mental strength to be so powerful and terrible, or the distribution range to be so broad.

Luo Yuan suddenly wrinkled his eyebrows. He had discovered that when his Sensory Perception shrunk to a radius of 20 meters, it could not shrink any further. No matter how hard he pushed his Will, there was no further movement. It seemed like he had stretched it to its limit.

He also felt a bulging sensation between his eyebrows, as if there was something there about to break out. He thought of the man with that unique third eye, and wondered if he needed another eye to fully utilize his powers.

Somehow, he related this to the masks on many ancient statues. On Indian Buddha statues and Taoist Gods there was always a third eye drawn between the eyebrows. Ancient Greek philosophers called it "the throne of the soul." All faiths and religions had similar signs that represented the all-seeing eye of God.

According to human brain anatomy, between the eyebrows was the mysterious pineal gland, which was supposed to be where the soul resided.

Taoism and Buddhism used the phrase "opening the eye in the

sky" but they did not refer to the real eyes, but rather to having an illusionary eye between one's eyebrows.

Luo Yuan hesitated, but decided not to take the risk. After all, the brain was the most important organ and it was extremely vulnerable. If there was any slight damage to it, he would most likely die.

Plus, he still lacked any knowledge on this field, so it would be too risky to simply make an attempt. He decided to wait until he was stabilized in the future and discover the way by reading some Buddhist classics. Although most of these things were false, they could still provide some clues to inspire him.

Once he made his decision, his Will instantly dispersed, and once he released his mind, the Sensory Perception that was tightly bound suddenly spread as fast as lightning.

Everyone nearby except for Zhang Wu suddenly felt their brains go blank and their whole bodies freeze. Xu Zhiqiang and Xiao Baihong had a stronger Will, so the impact on them was minimal. Wen Yujie was the third one to wake up, while Tong Jianliang, who was the weakest one among them, remained frozen for a couple of seconds before he recovered.

Everyone felt panicked by the abnormal scene. Only when Luo Yuan explained, did they finally feel relieved. Once they knew about his power, everyone felt even more in awe of Luo Yuan.

Of course, Zhang Wu was the most bitter one. He had not

expected that the ability he'd always been so proud of could be so easily copied by someone else. Although the attack had not been perfect and the application had been very rough, it was still quite powerful.



# Chapter 289: The Dark Night

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The first floor of the shelter was like a refugee camp. There were many tents in the big lobby, and the whole place was occupied by strange smells. It was very noisy, as people were talking, and children were crying and shouting, which was very annoying.

While the second floor was not that good either, it was slightly better than the basement, and it was like heaven compared to the first floor. There was a group of people sitting on the floor, some meditating and others talking softly. It was Huang Jiahui and her friends, all looking anxious and insecure.

To explain why they were there, one would need to go back six days. Huang Jiahui had not seen Luo Yuan ever since he'd gone out with the government servant, but she'd received some shocking news the next morning. Apparently, several evolved men had disobeyed military orders and had been arrested.

Huang Jiahui had been shocked and worried, and Wang Shishi had almost cried and rushed out of the room. It had been impossible for them to bring her back.

Wang Shishi had not taken any direct action, but she had found Huo Dong and asked him about the location of the prison.

It had been a really shocking incident. Even Huo Dong had been in panic after hearing the news. He had told Wang Shishi everything he knew, and she had immediately rushed to the prison in anger, trying to rescue Luo Yuan. Surprisingly, she had found

Su Yu overlooking the situation in the prison.

She had been stopped after walking only for a few seconds.

Both of them could attack from a distance, but Wang Shishi had been defeated because she lacked experience. Luckily, she could fly, and Su Yu had been protected by the soldiers, so he had not been able to move much. In the end, he had just let her go.

That same afternoon, Wang Shishi had visited the prison again. However, security had become stricter by then. She had missed her chance. They all discussed it and thought it was not safe to stay there anymore. They had left their room at night with the help of Huo Dong and escaped to the first floor, where they had met up with Wang Xiaoguang.

...

Suddenly, there was chaos. A guy in a simple outfit squeezed through the crowd, looking extremely alert as he scanned the area around him. After a while, he came to a stop in front of a group of people.

"This is all the food and water for today. The inspections are getting stricter."

Huo Dong put down a small parcel and sighed before he whispered, "This afternoon, there will be lots of guards departing. I've checked and there were a few soldiers at the passage earlier,

but I'll find a solution."

"Thank you so much! Any news?" Huang Jiahui asked. Her lips were dry and cracked, and she looked exhausted.

"Not really. I heard that someone escaped from the prison and caused big chaos though. Otherwise, there wouldn't be so many soldiers there," Huo Dong said as he looked at Huang Jiahui. He looked exhausted as well. He had not been sleeping well lately.

"It must be Brother Luo!" Wang Shishi said, suddenly getting agitated. "I knew he wouldn't die that easily! He can kill giant mutated beasts after all!"

"Great minds think alike! I'll keep an eye on things, and keep you updated," Huo Dong said as he got up from the floor. "I can't stay for too long, I need to go."

Huang Jiahui nodded gratefully. After Huo Dong had left, she opened the parcel. There were buns and a bottle of water inside. The buns were enough for everyone, so each of them could have one. They finally had enough food, combined with what Wang Xianguang had gotten earlier.

Huang Jiahui looked at the food and packed it again. It was already 9 pm, so dinner time was over. It was too obvious for them to leave now.

The management and security might have looked messy, but

they were very strict. There were always military policemen checking around, and some of them were even undercover. That was why the place had remained peaceful until now. Even though people fought every once in a while, the police always managed to stop them.

The food supply was fixed, so it always had to be the exact same amount. Everyone needed to put up with the hunger except Wang Xianguang, but they were able to eat something at midnight.

"Xianguang, I'm sorry to trouble you these past few days," Huang Jiahui apologized.

"That's what friends are for. I would have already died without your help. This is nothing compared to when we first met," Wang Xianguang said as she looked down.

...

It was finally 9.30 p.m. and the lights in the lobby were off. All noises slowly faded, and the sound of snoring got stronger. They could finally eat their first meal of the day.

Sun Youde quickly took a bun and bit on it. It was very dry, but he felt extremely hungry.

He regretted following them there to escape. He had no special bond with these people after all. They were not his friends, so he would not have gotten into trouble if one of them had gotten

captured.

Sun Youde felt upset as he looked at them. They had all thought it was Luo Yuan when they'd heard that someone had escaped from prison. "Who do they think Luo Yuan is? Do they really think it's that easy for someone to turn against the machine?"

"Perhaps he might be able to survive longer, but he would definitely die if he tried to escape."

Sun Youde felt pain whenever he thought about his current situation. He had been a senior researcher, yet now he was suffering.

He did not understand why he would follow them. He should have been enjoying the finer things in life, not suffer and starve with them!

He looked at Wu Xiaoxiao, who was sitting right beside him. She looked older and exhausted, even though it had just been a few days. "Things can't continue this way!"

Sun Youde's eyes looked shiny in the dark.

...

It was midnight, and the sound of snores was loud.

Someone got up silently in the dark and slowly walked out with the aid of the dim light on the wall. There were a few security guards on duty, keeping one eye open while they rested the other. They were exhausted after half a night of duty and they did not take any action, even when they saw someone pass by.

The toilet was at the end of the corridor, so it was normal for people to pass on their way to use it. "Another one going to the toilet," one of them thought silently with a sigh.

However, he did not realize that a human shadow had flown past him while he had his eyes closed.

Sun Youde had wanted to report everything to the security guards in the first place, but he had felt that it was not safe. Although most of the people with him were women, none of them were kind, especially not the little girl, who made him feel really uncomfortable.

There were limited security guards, so once he reported them and caused chaos, they would know right away. By that time, he might be able to escape though. He decided to leave and go to the first floor to ensure his safety.

It was really quiet along the long corridor, but the light kept flashing with a subtle sound. There was no one in the passage. Only the sound of his footsteps could be heard. Sun Youde's heart was beating very fast, and half his urge to escape was gone.

He did not know why, but he kept feeling a cold sensation against

his back. He could sense someone watching him, and he began to imagine things. He quickly got himself under control and started walking faster.

He had no idea how long he had been walking when he finally reached the passage of the second floor. There were many soldiers there, which made him happy.

"Officer Huo Dong was not lying. This place is closely guarded."

"Who is it?" a soldier shouted, lifting his rifle right away.

Sun Youde was an average person, so he was naturally frightened to have so many people pointing their rifles at him.

"I..."

Just as he was about to explain, a strong force rushed towards him. He tried to struggle, but he could not move at all.

He felt like he was being tied as he walked towards the soldiers. He looked furious, but he tried to ignore his fear and fight.

"Stay there and wait for inspection, or we'll fire!"

"I repeat..."

...

The officer looking at him thought that he was strange. He suddenly waved and shouted, "Fire!"

The sound of gunfire crept into his ears as Sun Youde shook in fear and hopelessness.

His lips were moving as if he wanted to say something, but as soon as he opened his mouth, he vomited black blood. Then he closed his eyes and slumped down on the floor.

"Paging Emergency Defense Center, paging Emergency Defense Center! We found a suspect patient... He is dead, please move the corpse away!"

In just a few seconds, several people in white protective suits had quickly wrapped the corpse in a layer of plastic and left. The passage returned to its initial silence. Wang Shishi was watching from the air silently with a pair of cold eyes. She was like the Grim Reaper.



# Chapter 290: Disguise

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Luo Yuan suddenly opened his eyes in the dark. He looked at his watch and realized it was 5 a.m. The sewer was always dark, regardless of whether it was day or night, but Luo Yuan still woke up punctually.

The fat from the previous night had been burned off, and the smell of burnt protein filled the space. There was a meter-high pile of white bones beside him, most of it left by Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan got up from the ground and stretched. He felt amazingly good and relaxed. He waved at the Zhanmadao, which was inserted into the ground, and the Zhanmadao immediately fell on his hand.

Apparently, Wen Yujie had awakened by the noise, because she yawned and asked, "What time is it?"

"5 a.m."

"I see. I'm going back to sleep, it's still early." Wen Yujie was like a lazy kitten. She opened her eyes for a second, and then closed them again. Luo Yuan found a place very far from the others to do his morning exercise. He returned after an hour when everyone was awake. They were preparing breakfast, and had brought back a lot more animals compared to the first time. They had been shocked by Luo Yuan's appetite the previous day. There were many different kinds of animals, and Luo Yuan could not even recognize some of them.

Metal was flowing in liquid form in Xiao Baihong's hand, rapidly becoming a sharp knife. As he dissected a mutated beast with a sharp mouth, Xiao Baihong asked, "What's this thing?"

"It squeezed out of the ground. It's a dessert here, so the soil is loose. There are many collapsed places in the sewer. Due to the difference between the measurements and the difficulty of repairing them, they've had no time to fix them," Xu Zhiqiang said while he prepared the meat and grilled it above the fire. He was quite good at grilling food, and very soon the meat had turned a yellowish-gold color. It smelled delicious!

Xu Zhiqiang passed the meat to Luo Yuan, and then placed another one above the fire.

"How's your recovery progress?" Luo Yuan asked as he bit onto the meat Xu Zhiqiang had given him.

"I'm almost there. My evolved power is different, but I'll be alright as long as I stay alive," Xu Zhiqiang said calmly, although he looked touched and grateful. If Luo Yuan had not been there, he would have certainly died.

"Chief Minister Xu, your power is really cool! An evolved giant! Normal people would have died from fear!" Xiao Baihong said in envy before he continued, "I'm really curious though. Your appetite is not that big compared to Mr. Luo's. How did you make it?"

"To be honest, I really have no idea. Sometimes, I suddenly feel like I've become very big. It's really difficult to describe it."

Xu Zhiqiang smiled and said, "It's like the giant is always there, but you can't see him or touch him. It's like he's in a different space, and my body is only the part of me that currently exists in this universe. It's the mindset of a giant, the brain! I've checked all the information from the experts as well, but it's inconclusive. It's really difficult to explain at the moment."

He did not intend to hide it, as he had been bothered by that issue for a long time.

"Do you mean that being a giant is not your limit? You could get even bigger than this?" Wen Yujie asked in shock.

Even Luo Yuan was shocked to hear that.

It was normal to have that kind of reaction, but some people were able to hide it better. Most of them did not hide their response though, especially when they saw Luo Yuan do the same.

Xu Zhiqiang grinned and said, "I could get much bigger than you think. In fact, I could only grow up to five meters tall when I first acquired my power, and now I can grow up to 15 meters! However, there are also some weaknesses that come with becoming a giant. Otherwise, my power would have been able to upgrade further."

Luo Yuan was shocked. He suddenly realized that he had been

underestimating a lot of people.

All this time, he had been looking down on evolved men, and their performance had proved him right. For example, evolved men who evolved from their normal physique had imbalanced physical properties, and while some of their powers were really strong, others could cause them to die.

Although those who evolved with a specialty did not experience that kind of problem, their core properties were very weak. For example, Wang Shishi was quite powerful in attacking, and she was faster than the speed of sound, but her core properties were only slightly stronger than normal people's, and her reaction time was really slow. A normal person could hurt her severely if she did not remain alert.

If her enemy was as powerful as Luo Yuan and had a super-fast response, they could easily kill her from 20 meters away, even if she was on alert.

Although Luo Yuan had always known that evolved men had many different powers, he had not really thought that they could threaten him. However, he finally realized that he had been wrong.

Biological evolution was mysterious, and many exceptions and unimaginable powers could surface.

...

Although Luo Yuan did not feel hungry after his feast the previous day, he still finished most of his food, energy crystals forming in his heart again. Perhaps it was because of the leftover energy stored in his body, or due to the biological evolution of his genes.

However, the crystals shrunk and became as small as sesame seeds.

After his severe injury, Luo Yuan had realized that energy crystals was not only able to fill his stomach, but also save his life during a critical time. He would have needed to consume a lot of his own energy for self-treatment if he had not had the energy crystals. Perhaps he would not even have recovered as fast.

Therefore, storing energy from time to time had become another vital task.

Although the mutated beasts there were not high rank and could not supply much energy and power, the mosquitoes still had some flesh. Plus, the shelter would not remain quiet in the upcoming days. It would be hard to avoid a battle, so they needed to plan ahead.

After eating all the meat, Luo Yuan threw the bones aside. His actions made everyone feel like he was a giant beast in human skin.

After the feast, Luo Yuan got up and took his Zhanmadao. "Let me check the situation upstairs," he said.

"It's too dangerous for you to go alone, I'm coming with you," Wen Jieyu said without hesitation. She was good at controlling light and hiding their whereabouts, so even if Luo Yuan was caught, she believed that she could help him escape.

Luo Yuan smiled and said confidently, "It's fine. It will be more complicated if more people come along. Besides, they might not be able to recognize me."

His facial muscles began to move as he talked, his eyebrows becoming lower and growing downwards, and his cheeks growing longer and sinking. In just a few seconds, a guy with a skinny body had appeared before them.

"How about this?" Luo Yuan said to himself. "Oh right, the height!"

Suddenly, he grew an inch taller.

That was too easy for him. He was really good at controlling his muscles and bones.

# Chapter 291: Trap

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"Freeze!"

The maintenance room of the sewer was just next to the military camp. A group of soldiers quickly ran over and surrounded Luo Yuan as soon as he'd stepped out of the entrance.

"What are you doing here? You seriously didn't know that this was a campsite?"

Luo Yuan looked furious, but he quickly calmed himself down. He pretended to be panicked as he said, "I'm sorry, I'm really sorry. Staying at my place for so long was too boring. I didn't realize I'd walked all the way here. I really didn't know that this was a campsite."

"Show me your identity card, I want to check it.'

"Identity card? Who carries their identity card with them, brothers?" Luo Yuan asked. "Would you like to go back with me?"

The soldiers seemed slightly relieved as they looked at each other. They did not think that Luo Yuan looked like one of the wanted prisoners. They just waved and said, "This is a warning. We're letting you go this time. but we'll arrest you if we see you again!"

"Thank you, officers. I'm leaving now..." Luo Yuan responded

quickly.

The leader of the soldiers looked at his Zhanmadao. He suddenly felt that something was wrong, but he did not say anything. He just let Luo Yuan go.

Luo Yuan had managed to avoid the soldiers. The passages of the shelter could lead to many places, but Luo Yuan realized that there were soldiers guarding almost all the junctions of the passages. Some of the junctions had built-in outposts.

Luo Yuan had gone through five checkpoints in half an hour. He might have had to fight the soldiers if he had not said that he had an identity card. At the end, he had been forced to steal the identity card of a stranger and disguise himself to look like them. Then the constant checking had finally stopped.

All along the way, he saw many dark red blood stains and holes made by bullets. Some of the walls were damaged, and a few passages had already collapsed. Obviously, there must have been a battle there earlier. It seemed like the prisoners who had escaped with him the previous day had not lived for long.

The rebels were almost in total control. Luo Yuan had run out of time, and the longer he took, the more dangerous it would be for him. He grew anxious as he thought about Huang Jiahui and his friends. He didn't even know if they were still alive.

He was not planning on collecting information, but he would not mind killing some people if he got the chance.



Luo Yuan quickly stopped thinking. The municipal government was quite close already.

The security was stricter there than in other places. There was a big team of soldiers in front of the entrance inspecting both sides of the passage, and there were also two tanks with their engines already on.

Luo Yuan felt like he was being targeted by snipers. He could feel scopes on his chest and back as he walked closer.

He acted calm though, peeping at them before turning into another passage.

Suddenly, he stopped walking. Someone had appeared in front of the entrance of the municipal government. Shen Jixing, whom he had just seen the previous day, was walking towards Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan hid and pulled him aside as he passed by.

Shen Jixing was shocked. He felt something cold and sharp against his throat when he tried to fight back.

"Don't move unless you want to die!" Luo Yuan whispered in his ear. His voice felt cold, yet familiar. Shen Jixing suddenly felt dizzy. He fell aside before he even had time to think.

"Who are you?" Shen Jixing looked at the blade under his throat. He was shocked and mad at the same time. "We are in front of the municipal government. You're not going to escape if you kill me!"

"Unbelievable! You've become a rebel in just one day," Luo Yuan said coldly as he slowly returned to his original appearance.

Shen Jixing's will to attack dissipated rapidly. No matter how arrogant Luo Yuan could be, he did not have the confidence to kill him.

He just stared at him as he said, "You're not me! You can say whatever you want, but I can't! I can't bear it! If I didn't surrender to them, my mother would die and so would I. I'm fine with it, but I can't let my mother suffer. What else could I do?"

Luo Yuan hesitated, remembering his dead parents. "This is not the reason you've become a traitor! Tell me, who is the leader of the rebellion?"

Shen Jixing felt relieved when he saw the blade move away from his throat. He knew he was safe as he said, "It's a really powerful evolved man. He's very scary. I think you better give up, he's above level five!"

"Where is he?" Luo Yuan interrupted him.

"He's in there. He hardly shows his face, but I met him earlier," Shen Jixing said.

"Take me there!" Luo Yuan said.

"This..." Shen Jixing hesitated. Luo Yuan's facial expression was furious once again. Shen Jixing quickly said, "Fine, but security is very strict here. You need to give me your sword and your identity card."

Shen Jixing felt relieved as he saw Luo Yuan nod. They both fixed their clothes, and then Shen Jixing took Luo Yuan's Zhanmadao. "Follow me, and don't say a word."

Luo Yuan disguised himself as Xiao Baihong. He looked skinnier and a few centimeters taller, but strangers would not be able to tell the difference.

Shen Jixing felt surprised. Luo Yuan had already changed his appearance once though, so he did not find it strange anymore.

Everything went smoothly because Luo Yuan had someone take him along. The guards only questioned them briefly before immediately letting them go. Judging by their attitude, Shen Jixing had to have a certain authority.

The municipal hall was huge. There were about 10 offices as well as five to six corridors with lots of people rushing here and there. The sound of a printer could be heard around the place. Everyone looked super busy. Luo Yuan thought that everything that had happened had been an illusion and Motu City had never been invaded.

He passed by the office of the Mayor, and saw that the door was open wide. Looking inside, he saw a middle-aged man reading some documents. Although he did not raise his head, Luo Yuan could still recognize Mayor Song, whom he had already met earlier.

Luo Yuan was curious as he recalled Xu Zhiqiang talking about Officer Liu. He was wondering whether all these people were being controlled mentally. He felt something strange. Mayor Song naturally raised his head and looked at the entrance. He looked calm though. It did not seem like anything was wrong. Luo Yuan turned his eyes away.

"How far more to go?"

"It's just around the corner!" Shen Jixing was getting nervous.

There was a grill at the end of the corridor, and four soldiers were standing on both sides of it. The soldiers did not ask anything, even when they saw the two of them walking towards them. They immediately pressed a button on the wall, and the door opened.

Luo Yuan looked at Shen Jixing in shock.

Shen Jixing looked panicked, but he remained silent. His body was shaking.

Luo Yuan frowned and became very serious. He could tell that this person was very powerful, as Shen Jixing seemed really afraid of him.

The place was very spacious. It was about the size of a basketball court, but there was nothing much in there except for a few iron towers as tall as the ceiling.

Several copper cables as big as human arms were wrapped around the towers. Each of the towers had to weigh at least 10 tons.

"Electromagnetic Towers!" Luo Yuan's expression changed immediately.

Suddenly, the main door closed loudly and someone came out of the hallway, clapping his hands.

"Indeed! Our super-evolved man! I've been waiting for you for a long time." Su Yu walked out of the dark.

There was suddenly a lot of electrostatic electricity flowing freely in the hall as he appeared. Luo Yuan's hair was standing on end.

His eyes suddenly became furious as he realized his opponent already knew his identity. He knew he had been tricked, but he did not understand how. He looked at Shen Jixing and realized the man had stepped a few meters away from him.

"Shen Jixing!"

He suddenly understood everything. It was impossible for someone who had just surrendered to not be monitored closely. The technology was sophisticated enough to allow anyone to monitor someone else with a bug as tiny as a button.

Luo Yuan had not realized that the conversation they'd had earlier had been a trap. He was very embarrassed. He seemed to grow less alert as he became more powerful.

Shen Jixing looked cocky as he kept stepping backward. He had bumped into Luo Yuan by accident. He had never expected that to happen. He had been planning on killing his master, but he could not believe that Luo Yuan had fallen into the trap.

Five meters, six meters... He was getting more relaxed as he moved further away from Luo Yuan. "Surrender, Luo Yuan! Otherwise, you'll die!"

Luo Yuan suddenly smiled at Shen Jixing, who immediately felt that something was wrong.

Sh\*t!

He got ready to attack, but unfortunately, it was too late. A shadow had already jumped over seven to eight meters as his vision became blurry. He sensed the danger, and his body started shaking.

However, the sword had gone missing before he could use his force. Suddenly, he felt something cold on his neck.

Blood was gushing out like a fountain as Shen Jixing felt hopeless and afraid. He looked at Luo Yuan, who had already gone back to his original position before he fell on the floor.

Luo Yuan was holding his Zhanmadao, a drop of blood dripping down its blade.

"It's your turn now," he said.

## Chapter 292: Deadly Fight

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Su Yu's casual smile gradually disappeared, his face becoming somewhat dignified.

Watching Luo Yuan's lightning-fast action, even he himself could not react for a moment. He could only watch as his new lackey was easily beheaded by Luo Yuan.

Blood flowed out from the corpse fast, forming a big puddle that emitted a thick smell.

The two of them confronted each other without moving as the air around them turned chilly.

The electromagnetic towers in the room had not been set up for Luo Yuan, but for Su Yu's training purposes. However, he felt glad about them at the moment. Facing an enemy like Luo Yuan made him experience tremendous pressure.

The switch of the electromagnetic towers was five to six meters to the left. Once he pulled it, several electromagnetic and nuclear power plants would get connected and start generating electrical currents up to 50,000 volts, which was enough to burn anyone to a crisp. However, Su Yu felt like he had been tied into place and there were thorns at his back that did not allow him to move.

"I really underestimated you, but if you think you can kill me, you are too naïve. This place will become your grave!" Su Yu stared at him as he said in a cold voice, "Unless you want to join us. A new



era is here. As evolved humans, we welcome any like-minded people to build a new world with us."

Luo Yuan held on to his long knife as he looked at him with sharp eyes. He remained silent, staring at him as if he was about to kill him. His expression made Su Yu feel inexplicably annoyed.

"Stubborn!" he scolded. Soon, something started leaking from his body, and numerous tendrils of electrical currents as thick as chopsticks surrounded him. They flowed at a fast speed, producing popping sounds as a magnetic force levitated Su Yu's body gradually.

As he was floating, a dozen steel balls inside his pockets were surrounded by the strong currents, forming a dense electronic solenoid.

These electromagnetic bombs were his finest creation.

Although the bombs were as small as fists, they weighed a few hundred grams. Through a dense loop of electrosurgical acceleration, their speed was twice as fast as the speed of sound and their destructive power was about the same as small shells. If attacked, a creature would basically become meat sauce.

When the electromagnetic bomb was formed, Su Yu was about to rest his mind. However, his heart suddenly started beating violently, and an unspeakable power enveloped the entire hall. Even the air seemed to become slightly distorted.

Su Yu was a fighter who had survived a cruel battlefield though, so even though this power might have been enough to kill a light blue level mutated beast, it only made him dizzy for a few seconds before he managed to jerk out of it. Still, his absent-mindedness had caused the electromagnetic bomb that had just formed to dissipate instantly, the steel balls falling to the floor.

"Oh!" Su Yu was frightened.

He suddenly realized that Luo Yuan was no longer at his original place. A vague shadow was approaching him at lightning speed. Luo Yuan's speed was currently 200m/s, even faster than sports cars, which drove at 180 km/h. By the time Su Yu realized this, Luo Yuan was already 10 meters away from him. It only took 0.3 seconds from the moment he saw his target until his brain adjusted to avoid the collision.

Su Yu's scalp was tingling. Suddenly, he was covered in electromagnetic energy, his body immediately producing a loud noise. The several kV high voltage ionized the air and exuded a smell of ozone. The next moment, the strong electromagnetic energy suddenly pushed Su Yu's body like an arrow, quickly moving to the left to avoid Luo Yuan.

Even so, the strong wind still blew through his body until the current was scattered away.

Luo Yuan's knife had hit nothing. As he saw Su Yu fly towards the switch on the wall, his face changed and he quickly lifted his feet to fly as well. When he abruptly bent over 90 degrees to the left, a powerful impact was created, causing the hard concrete

floor to be blasted away from under his feet. There was gravel flying around as his dark blue shoes instantly burst.

This was an enemy who was good at attacking from a distance, so he should never have let him put distance between them. Especially not when there were several killing machines in the hall.

He had seen a lot of electromagnetic towers before. The towers outside Desert City had been used to kill insects with a kind of electromagnetic power. Once those towers were energized to full electrical capacity, the electrical phylogenetic power of the enemy and their killing capacity instantly increased a few times.

Suddenly, an optic energy filled the entire hall. It looked like a thunderstorm was coming. No matter how confident Luo Yuan was, this was a dead end.

One of them was ahead and the other was behind, but both of them were running fast towards the wall.

Su Yu was driven by an electromagnetic speed, but his speed was still much slower than Luo Yuan's. Still, he was too close to the gates. He was only about five meters away. In less than 0.2 seconds, Su Yu's hand had reached the switch, while Luo Yuan was still three meters away from him.

As soon as the switch was turned on, a loud noise was heard. Several currents as thick as arms burst out at the same time that Luo Yuan stabbed his knife into Su Yu's back.

Before Luo Yuan could expand his strength to maximize the attack though, Su Yu flashed out a current from his body, making Luo Yuan jump away.

Su Yu pressed on his chest, but blood kept flowing out nonstop. He slowly walked backward as he saw Luo Yuan stand up quickly. He suddenly laughed, "It's all over! I forgot to tell you that my heart is on the right side of my chest."

Before he had even finished his sentence, numerous thick electro-optics had gathered from the six electromagnetic towers. He was now surrounded by a blazing light. It was like a small sun had risen in the hall.

Luo Yuan looked at the shadow with the powerful energy fluctuation before him. His face turned grim, and his right hand started trembling uncontrollably. His palm had been burnt after being hit by Su Yu's current just now. He could not even hold his sword properly anymore. Losing his right arm had made his fighting power drop by three levels. He had almost no chance of winning now.

His eyes glanced furtively around the hall, but there was no way out. The Iron Gate was already closed, and his enemy would not let him escape.

He was currently attacking him at lightning speed, his human body naturally attracting all electrical currents. Luo Yuan had almost no chance of escaping. He had fallen into despair.

Suddenly, an arm-sized lightning struck Luo Yuan, blasting him about six meters away and making him fall heavily on the floor.

"I thought you were strong. Come on! Come and kill me!" Amid the lightning, Su Yu's voice fluctuated in the air surrounding them, creating an echo.

Luo Yuan stood up with an expressionless look. There was blood in his mouth, and his chest was charred. The lightning had created a big hole in his dark blue level floating tracksuit. Most of the damage had been absorbed by his plasma underwear though, so he was only slightly injured and had suffered some physical shock.

"How is this possible?" Su Yu shouted out loud in surprise when he noticed that Luo Yuan was not injured. That lightning had been at least 10,000 volts. Even an ordinary level six mutated beast would not have been able to withstand it.

He waved his hand, and this time almost half the current in his body was shot towards Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan was struck by lightning once again. He was lifted several meters high before falling heavily on the floor. He slowly stood up. This time it wasn't just his mouth. His nose and ears had also started to bleed, and his suit had been turned into rags.

...

When Su Yu saw Luo Yuan get hit again but still able to stand up, his face started to turn ugly. He stretched out his hand, and a steel ball about six meters away floated rapidly in the air, a thick electrical current surrounded it and emitted a glaring light. With that, the magnetic field in the air began to turn intensively volatile and produce a buzzing sound.

Thanks to the addition of the six electromagnetic towers, the power formed by the electromagnetic bombs were far more powerful than the previous times. If it was successfully released, he would definitely get killed and the whole shelter would collapse.

Luo Yuan looked frightened after watching the scene. A very strong sense of danger rose from within him, starting from his tailbone before spreading throughout his body. He seemed to smell the rancid smell of death.

He had been hesitant for a while, but now he was determined.

His remaining Sensory Perception entered his mind like accelerating water. He felt like there was a bulge between his eyebrows and a powerful force was about to be released. Suddenly, he appeared vigorous, and a majestic power started gushing out from between his eyebrows.

A bunch of invisible, spatial fluctuations shot out from his eyebrows and instantly hit Su Yu. The air seemed to fluctuate a little bit, but other than that, there seemed to be no changes.

Luo Yuan had no time to observe the effect of the attack. He only felt the explosion in his mind before he started feeling dizzy. His thoughts scattered around as if his brain had split into two. He suddenly got a headache, and he clenched his teeth until they rattled. His body shook until he could not hold on anymore and finally sat down on the ground.

After a second, or maybe an hour, he gradually got his senses back and stood up slowly.

The flapping sound of the electromagnetic towers could still be heard, but Su Yu, who had been floating in the air earlier, was lying on the floor. The electrical currents covering his body had disappeared, and Luo Yuan was not sure if he was still alive.

Luo Yuan groaned. Enduring the tearing pain in his head, he picked up the Zhanmadao and walked step by step towards his enemy.

Su Yu looked pale. The gurgling blood from the wound had flowed over on the floor, but his chest still rose and fell slightly, indicating that his body was still alive. However, Luo Yuan was unable to determine whether his soul had dissipated.

He did not want to take any risks, so he used his left hand to pick up the Zhanmadao and chopped off his head.

"It's finally over!"

It was what his enemy had said before, but in the end it was Luo Yuan who had outlasted him.

Without a care for the gory scene, he sat down beside the corpse and began to heal his own wounds. He looked miserable with his tattered clothes and bleeding wounds, but compared to his previous injury, this one was undoubtedly lighter. Other than his right hand, which was slightly charred, the rest was just some internal injuries. Some of his viscera had been slightly ruptured, but even without treatment, his physique would help him recover in a couple of days.

After consuming so much Sensory Perception, his intuition for danger had reached its lowest point. Even his Will had become extremely difficult to be concentrate. He did not dare stay there for long. He just used his Will to heal himself hastily before he stood up and moved his right wrist. It had almost returned to normal. Luo Yuan's face changed as he transformed into Su Yu.

He picked up the Zhanmadao, and walked towards the metal door.



## Chapter 293: Illusion

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The tattered suit had been ripped off by Luo Yuan to reveal the turtle-egg synthetic bulletproof vest underneath it. He went to the door and pressed the button of the iron gate. When the iron gate slowly rose, his face began to look intense and his hand slowly gravitated to the hilt of his Zhanmadao. No matter how perfect the camouflage was, there were still slight differences in skin color, eyes, facial expressions, as well as some of the common habits and gestures. Any familiar person would be able to differentiate it very easily.

Fortunately, Luo Yuan worries were unjustified as the soldiers guarding the door glanced at him, offered a salute, and then looked down again. Luo Yuan nodded slightly, then walked away with an expressionless face. When he passed by the mayor's office, he looked inside and noticed that Mayor Song had gone out. However, there was a beautiful and sexy woman sitting in front of the mayor's desk! Her perfectly shaped brows kept frowning as she flipped through the files in the office.

"Is this his new secretary?" He was a bit puzzled as he continued to stare at her flawless beauty. Suddenly, the lady looked up! Luo Yuan hurriedly paced away from the place to avoid being noticed.

Luo Yuan knew that these group of wanderers still had accomplices with them. There must be at least one mind controller among them. Nonetheless, Luo Yuan's condition was very bad at this point and his body was unable to support him to continue fighting.

Moreover, the worst thing was not his body but his brain. His brain was in all kinds of pain and he has yet to see a single sign of recovery. He even started seeing illusions. For example, he could see colorful scales in front of his eyes!

The scales were very strange and he could not describe them. A large amount of information flooded through his brain till his mind almost crashed. If a battle happened now, the consequence would undoubtedly be bad for him. Fortunately, these illusions appeared and disappeared in quick intervals of less than 0.1 seconds.

Oddly enough, Luo Yuan could not seem to remember any of it. He only remembers having illusions but could not tell what they were about specifically. What color, what shape or what size.

Before this, he had a premonition that the use of spiritual attacks would have its fair share of consequences but he never knew that it would be so serious. Luo Yuan's heart was racing rapidly just thinking about the situation while he continued walking.

Along the way, people gave him a respectful nod and moved to the side to let him pass. Some of them secretly looked at Luo Yuan curiously but no issues surfaced. Once he could get outside, the chances of being recognized was low. He hid his identity by wearing Su Yu's clothing so the journey was unimpeded.

When he came near to the sewer's maintenance room, Luo Yuan quickly morphed back to his original look. He quickly did this when the soldiers on guard were not looking. Surprisingly, the door was left unlocked. He pushed the door open, walked inside

and closed it. The whole process was done in 0.5 seconds. There were hardly any other movements aside from some dust being scattered around.

...

"How is the situation outside? Have you found out who it is?" Xu Zhiqiang asked immediately when he saw Luo Yuan.

"Mr. Luo, are they searching for us?" Xiao Baihong also asked.

Wen Yujie was relatively cautious and noticed Luo Yuan had taken off his jacket. She asked worriedly, "Were you involved in a fight? Are you injured?"

"The problem is half solved," Luo Yuan said while enduring the pain he felt. "I killed their leader but did not meet the mind controller. We can only wait for the next opportunity!"

Xu Zhiqiang was left with his jaws opened as he gave Luo Yuan a stunned look and thought in his heart, "Before this, you said you'd try to scout for some information ... but now you have already solved more than half of the problem. Don't tell us that everything was just easy, ok!?"

But this was only in his mind. Instead of saying this, he dryly said, "So, the mastermind has been take care of. Now we are left with the mind controller and a few unimportant people."

Luo Yuan rubbed his eyebrows and said, "That's almost right."

"Mr. Luo..." Xu Zhiqiang wanted to ask further but was interrupted angrily by Wen Yujie, "Don't ask anymore. Have you all not noticed that Luo Yuan is not feeling well?"

Only now did everyone realize that Luo Yuan's face was pale as a sheet and his forehead was covered with cold sweat. They quickly kept quiet without saying a word.

Luo Yuan closed his eyes and leaned against the wall for a while to rest. He then opened his eyes and spoke, "Zhang Wu, I have a question to ask you."

"What's up, Mr. Luo? You can just ask!" Zhang Wu said quickly. The hierarchy of evolutionary beings was now strictly guarded. It was a must to maintain the necessary respect when talking to a stronger person.

"With all due respect, I would like to know about your third eye. What exactly are its capabilities?" Luo Yuan asked. He saw Zhang Wu glance around covertly. He waved his hand to signal Luo Yuan and said, "Can all of you go out for a while?"

The abilities of the third eye on Zhang Wu's forehead was his most private secret. It was a hidden killer and he would not let anyone know about it even if they are his closest friends. If it was not asked by Luo Yuan, who was the only level five evolutionary human in Desert City, he would never want to tell his secret.

Once everyone left, Zhang Wu still hesitated for a while. After he gathered some courage, he said, "My third eye is a special eye ... its abilities can be split into three aspects: breaker, psychic and time dilation. Breaker, refers to the ability to see through everything - including darkness, fogs, and bright light. Nothing can block my sight. For example, Xiao Wen's light refraction will not work on me! My psychic ability is more straightforward - I can see the soul during the death of a human being."

Luo Yuan then quickly interrupted him, "Soul? Do people really have souls?" Luo Yuan asked curiously. In fact, he had seen souls before. At the very start of the apocalypse, Luo Yuan had migrated to the east of the city and there was a tree nearby his house that was cursed with many souls. He had never seen any souls after that so until now he could not confirm whether souls really existed or not.

"I'm not sure, maybe it's just temporary fluctuations in spirit after the death. Their existence is very short and they disappear very quickly whether it is day or night."

"What about 'time dilation'?" Luo Yuan asked.

Zhang Wu hesitated again before he continued, "This is the most powerful one among my three capabilities. It can accelerate my time to the point that every action in the world is moving so slowly in my eyes. For example, although I am always exhausted dealing with level three mutated beast, under this state it would not be a problem for me to fight with a level four mutated beast." He explained his abilities in detail which was very clear to Luo Yuan.

Luo Yuan noted one weakness to his special powers though. This phenomenon was just like what adding points to agility without increasing combat power. In fact, his combat power would only go one level up when he used this ability.

Adding a point to dexterity was necessary to improve his neural response rate. If he wanted to use a combat power, it would also depend on strength, composure, and wisdom. Without power, speed is useless; without composure, he could not garner the continued explosive strength; without wisdom, he would be unresponsive at times of battle. Based on Luo Yuan's experience, small enhancements towards agility without improvements on other capabilities would mean that his response rate would also be slower.

He asked for clarification from Zhang Wu, "In this case, are you able to react promptly?"

"Why not?" Zhang Wu looked confused, "My time is accelerated but my actions are still the same!"

Luo Yuan was a bit surprised by the response. Perhaps this phenomenon was very different from adding a point to dexterity. Was it because of the time aspect? Luo Yuan found that the more he interacted with evolutionary beings, the more mysterious everything seemed. He was already shocked by the abilities of Xu Zhiqiang, and now there is one more mysterious man in front of him. Compared to these powers, he felt quite embarrassed with his earth stomping ability that he used to be proud of.

Luo Yuan quickly snapped out of his personal comparisons and

refocused on the original intention for asking about his powers. He asked, "Other than powers, do you see anything else? Like hallucinations or illusions?"

"No, no hallucinations at all!" Zhang Wu said.

Luo Yuan then thought to himself, "How could this be? Do I really have brain damage?"

According to early biological studies, the brain is complex and sophisticated. There are still many aspects that are in unfamiliar territory. There was also no cure for most mental illnesses including brains that hallucinate.

He touched his eyebrows and there was still some pain. He could not help but feel annoyed.

He took a deep breath to control his emotions and continued, "I understand that abilities are a very private matter to every evolutionary human. I know I owe you something after asking so many questions. Just tell me what your request is."

"I do not want anything, I just want to follow you!" Zhang Wu said quickly. His face was somehow apprehensive.

"Follow me? I have no political power or potential, why should you follow me?" Luo Yuan asked and continued "... and the condition in the refuge will soon return to normal so you do not need to hide anymore."

"Desert City is done for. Even after so many days, there is still no direction from the top management. Apparently, they have already given up." Zhang Wu looked tense as he replied. It was the first time he felt helpless since his first job interview after graduation.

"There are only two options if I continue to stay here - one is to migrate to the mainland redevelopment areas and the other is to stay here. If I am fortunate, I can survive with these resources until the development area is ready to counterattack. Otherwise, I can only wait to die. Either options are very dangerous. My abilities are very limited so if I want to stay alive, the best way is to follow you."

"You are so honest." Luo Yuan did not think it was a big issue and said, "Since you want to, you can just follow me."

Zhang Wu was extremely excited by his response. Over the past two days, he had learned that this legendary level five evolutionary human had a warm personality. He spoke calmly and was not arrogant thus he dared to share information about his abilities. Through this, he also managed to grab the opportunity to ask Luo Yuan if he could follow him. In his mind, there was no shame attaching himself to powerful or wealthy people. Following the right people was the most important thing to do, not to mention that Luo Yuan was undoubtedly a very strong leader to follow.

Zhang Wu had little ambition and status during the end of the world and felt that everything was like castles on the beach as it would eventually disappear. Striving to survive was the most



realistic thing to do.

# Chapter 294: Four-Dimensional Vision

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After lunch, Luo Yuan tried to be stealthy again and escaped to the sewer. He entered his Earth Stomp state once more to try to heal himself but the progress was very poor. It was not completely ineffective though as his external wounds had healed and the severity of his headache reduced. However, his hallucinations did not seem to improve.

He still could not describe the hallucinations in words as he could not even remember them. It was made up of everything readily available around him which included dizzying colors, a variety of sounds and shapes with an infinite amount of information swirling around. He felt dizzy every time it happened because it was too much for the human brain to process.

Luo Yuan realized that the duration for him to recover from his dazed state was increasing as the frequency of the hallucinations increased. His condition was now worse than what he could imagine. If it continues this way, he might not be able to think like a normal person anymore. Worse still, he could even fall into a coma.

He tried closing his eyes but it did not work. The hallucinations were not affected as it would still be there regardless if he left his eyes opened or closed. Luo Yuan tried other ways to reduce the impact of the hallucinations and finally, he realized he felt better when he applied pressure on his eyebrows.

This discovery was akin to finding light in a dark tunnel and gave him a glimmer of hope. It also proves that the hallucinations were

not triggered by any damage to his cerebral cortex. He felt much relief knowing that he was free of any mental disorders.

As Luo Yuan had finally found the triggering factor, the next thing he needed to do was to carry out a few simple mechanical tests to try to control it. Just like how Thomas Edison conducted some experiments to discover the materials necessary for the creation of the filament, he tested every kind of material he could find. For example, he conducted experiments with hard cement, rotten wood, metals, skin, fur, and flesh from animals as well as many different plants. Luo Yuan found more things in a very short time and tested them too.

He learned a lot from his experiments on methods to reduce the frequency of the hallucinations. Firstly, inorganic substances were useless-regardless whether they were metal or soil. Secondly, flesh was more effective compared to plants. Thirdly, the higher level the meat, the more effective it would be. Luo Yuan tried all the materials he could find and he even used his own bulletproof jacket and his undershirt. He discovered something new once more. He realized that his plasma field undershirt was way better than the bulletproof jacket made from the Archelon's egg shell in reducing the effects of the hallucinations. The difference between them was the quality. He felt there was a barrier from the hallucinations when he placed the plasma field undershirt over his forehead. He could finally see the hallucinations clearly.

He did not feel dizzy anymore and was able to think better now. The plasma field undershirt was a similar level to the bulletproof jacket made from the Archelon's egg shells but the difference was the layer of plasma field on the undershirt. He was struck by lightning before when he fought early one morning but he did not

even get hurt. Most of the current was blocked by the plasma field and part of it was absorbed by the undershirt. He linked the mutated beasts' level to the effectiveness of the synthesized materials and was delighted that he had finally found the answer - it was energy! The level of the mutated beasts was categorized based on the amount of active energy particles inside their body. The more active energy they have, the higher their level will be. The plasma field undershirt was more powerful than the bulletproof jacket made from the Achelon's egg shell due to its complementary power.

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Luo Yuan quickly flattened the undershirt on the floor and pulled out his Zhanmadao. He then gathered his will and began to cut carefully when a layer of light appeared on the surface of the Zhanmadao. There were some sounds that could be heard in the sky followed by a blue lightning flash that disappeared. Luo Yuan cut the cloth into a few long strips and then wrapped them around his eyebrows. He felt better after that and the illusions could hardly affect him from then on. He then exhaled a sigh of relief and picked up his outer shirt. He put on his shirt and returned to his new base with his Zhanmadao.

...

Everyone looked at Luo Yuan as they saw him return with a strap wrapped around his forehead. The strap was glowing in the dark and it became more obvious as the night progressed. Everyone felt more and more curious about his new accessory. It was understandable if a young person did that as they like to try on

new trendy things to attract attention. However, it was quite strange for such a powerful person like Luo Yuan to do the same thing. Wen Jieyu's expression was especially shocked with her mouth left half open!

Luo Yuan felt helpless as he noticed that they were all looking at him awkwardly. However, the awkward feeling was better than having to suffer the pains caused by the hallucinations. In the end, Luo Yuan felt that it was probably better for him to explain the reason he was wearing this on his forehead even though he did not really care how people perceived him. Besides, he was not living alone in the area.

"Please stop looking at me like this. I had encountered some difficulties triggered by my training earlier. I could not adapt to it temporarily and needed something to help to soothe the pain." Luo Yuan said calmly.

"No wonder Mr. Luo was asking me about the power of my third eye. Now I know why." Zhang Wu immediately said to complete Luo Yuan's explanation.

"Does this mean that Brother Luo has also mastered the power of the third eye? I thought you told us that different evolved men could not learn it?" Wen Jieyu was shocked and asked. Everyone felt intrigued and confused by the suggestion from Zhang Wu. However, it was true that Luo Yuan had made a breakthrough and successfully cloned the power!

...

It was now 11 pm and the light in the area had burnt off releasing a charred smell in the air. Everyone had fallen asleep now and an orchestra of snores occupied the entire space.

Although their new space was not considered to be on the outskirts, it was still dangerous as there were many different bugs, snakes and rats moving around. The place almost became infested by many poisonous beasts. Therefore, there must be someone on duty every night to protect the group. Xu Zhiqiang and Xiao Baihong were on duty together last night and tonight was Luo Yuan's turn.

With Luo Yuan's capabilities, there will be no danger during the nights he is on duty. Thus, everyone would be sleeping soundly with no worries. Luo Yuan leaned against the wall with his eyes half opened. During this time, Luo Yuan finally had the mood to explore the mysterious hallucinations he had been facing. He had an instinct that the hallucinations were not normal and there must be something unimaginable behind it to be able to affect him in this way.

He analyzed that the frequency of the hallucinations and noticed that its occurrence was irregular. Sometimes, it only occurred once every a few minutes and sometimes it happened once every 30 seconds. Besides that, it happened more often in the sewer compared to other places. Suddenly, Luo Yuan realized something strange. He noted that the hallucinations occurred every single time he looked at Xu Zhiqiang. He did not pay attention to it earlier as he felt dizzy but now that the night was quiet enough to allow him to think, more information started flowing in.

He then looked at Xu Zhiqiang who was sleeping to confirm his speculation. Indeed, it happened! It was a colorful light moving in his eyes and spinning rapidly just like a kaleidoscope! He got quite addicted to it for a moment. Besides that, it was different compared to his other hallucinations as it would not randomly appear or disappear. It was there constantly and it felt as though it was bonding with the physical body of Xu Zhiqiang.

He suddenly recalled that there was a layer of plasma over his forehead which meant that the effects were probably reduced. He hesitated for a moment but then unwrapped the plasma field strapped on his forehead. He immediately became pale after looking at Xu Zhiqiang again and quickly moved away. It took him some time to recover from the pain without relying on the plasma. He was having a very bad headache and could not remember what he had seen.

Luo Yuan put on the strap again and suddenly realized something. Since the sensory shock on his forehead had a reaction towards certain people, that should be considered as a type of power. He was not sure whether the system had any information regarding this power though.

He quickly opened the now-familiar status panel and scanned through the record. Finally, he found some details under 'talents'. There was one more item under that category other than Earth Stomp. To prove that his thoughts were correct, he naturally read more about it. The descriptions made it sound like he had magical powers. This naturally made his heart beat rapidly!

"Four-Dimensional Vision!"



# Chapter 295: Revisit

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"Four-Dimensional Depth: 1%"

"Effect: You can explore the four-dimensional space with this power."

"Remarks: The world has vastly expanded and is more mysterious which makes three-dimensional animals feel so tiny. Advice: Do not look at the fourth-dimensional world directly for too long as you may have the fourth eye but you only have a three-dimensional brain."

The introduction of the system was valuable as usual. There were only about 100 words but Luo Yuan took more than five minutes to read and process it. Four-dimensional vision was indeed a great power. However, Luo Yuan did not find it useful for now.

Luo Yuan had some knowledge about the fourth-dimensional space as he was eager to learn more about it during his university life. He intentionally spent more time studying about space and the universe while he was still a student.

Usually, the common discussions of the world revolved around a single dot, a line made up of dots, and a surface which represents zero-dimensions, a single dimension and two dimensions.

The three-dimensional world is stereoscopic - which is what we

refer to as 'space'. It is the world where human beings can see.

If we try to comprehend it using mathematics, there are three axes representing three dimensions: the X-axis, Y-axis and Z-axis, which intersect each other vertically. However, the fourth dimension is formed by adding one more axis on top of the X, Y, and Z axes. This is something we cannot imagine or describe because we had never been exposed to it. It is also something we cannot explore easily.

Just like how beings in two dimensions can never understand the concept of height, humans from the three-dimensional world cannot understand the fourth axis due to the difference in what they can imagine and experience. The difficulty of studying about different dimensions is that all the information obtained varies from one dimension to another. Even the latest programming tools could not manage to record images in the fourth-dimensional space.

Luo Yuan's 14-point intelligence enabled him to filter through most of the information easily. From his discoveries, he learned that he was fortunate that his four-dimensional vision was not at a very high level yet. Otherwise, his brain would have exploded by now!

Despite his added intelligence, all the information appeared like complicated codes to him which he could not understand. At the end of the day, his intelligence was still in the three-dimensional space for now. Luo Yuan's passion and curiosity slowly faded and he began to feel disappointed. He realized that the discovery of his new talent had brought him issues rather than powers and at this

stage it was totally useless.

"No! That is wrong!" Luo Yuan then reassured himself that there must be a use to this power. He then turned around and looked Xu Zhiqiang and thought to himself, "At least this eye could filter out special individuals and see special things." The abilities of Luo Yuan's four-dimensional vision were reduced after he wrapped his eyebrows with plasma. This allowed him to look at the illusion directly and record what he saw.

As he gazed upon the colorful images, he suddenly realized something and was shocked. Those colors were probably part of Xu Zhiqiang's body in the four-dimensional world and his current body reflected a four-dimensional image in the three-dimensional world. This meant that Xu Zhiqiang's true nature should be of a four-dimensional creature which existed beyond human imagination.

Luo Yuan on the other hand, still existed as a three-dimensional creature. Perhaps it was because of the restriction of his intelligence as a three-dimensional creature which made him fail to evolve into a four-dimensional being. However, that would only be temporary. He would become a four-dimensional creature sooner or later as he could outlive many other creatures of this Earth. When that day comes, people might as well address Luo Yuan as 'God'! Luo Yuan shrugged as he had that thought. He did not know how many four-dimensional creatures already existed. If he bumped into any of them, it would certainly be difficult to deal with them.

...

Luo Yuan spent the entire night pondering on these thoughts until everyone woke up. He was suddenly struck by an epiphany! Since the fourth dimension would be considered to be far from his grasp and the third dimension was within grasp, it was unnecessary to think more of it at this stage. Luo Yuan went to the second floor in the refuge again after lunch. He realized those soldiers with rifles had gone away and many of the soldiers stationed in the look-out posts had been removed as well. There were only a few normal military policemen inspecting the street.

Luo Yuan had not encountered any difficulties throughout his journey back to the second floor. He was thinking about something as he observed the scene. He decided to disguise himself again and return to his original appearance. This was because Luo Yuan sensed that one of the military policemen had looked at him and even took photos of Luo Yuan from his pocket. The soldier checked the photo and then sprinted towards Luo Yuan in a hurry! He said nervously, "Mr. Luo, how are you? I finally found you! Mayor Song invited you to his place."

Luo Yuan smiled a little and said, "Could you please show me the way?"

The young policeman smiled and said, "Sure, it's my honor to serve you. Mayor Song instructed us to bring you over once we find you."

Luo Yuan followed the young man and walked towards the municipal hall. His smile faded and he slowly became more alert because of his past experiences. There was a mind controller

among the rebellions who had not revealed his face yet. Perhaps, he was in hiding after being scared by the incident that happened yesterday. Anyway, it's better to stay alert. The power he has might be enough to destroy an entire city if he was hidden in the right place.

Luo Yuan did some analysis and he felt that even if this could be a trap, he would still like to go and check it himself. He was powerful and brave enough to defend himself and it was not an easy job to attack him secretly.

The two of them finally arrived in front of the main entrance of the municipal hall. The young policeman ran towards the soldiers who were on duty and said something to them. A colonel with a badge on his uniform looked further and waved to let them go.

Luo Yuan was scanning around and his senses were like flowing mercury; it began to spread around the place. A lot of information flooded his mind quickly and usually, nothing could escape his mind. Everything was in fact normal. The hustle and bustle of people rushing here and there was very normal as if the battle from yesterday did not even happen.

Very soon, they arrived in front of the office of the Mayor. The policeman then knocked on the door.

"Come in!" A voice could be heard from the inside.

## Chapter 296: Mutation

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The young police officer quickly left the after knocking on the door. Luo Yuan pondered for a moment and then pushed the door open. There was another person present in the office in addition to Mayor Song. A woman graced them with her presence which made Luo Yuan's eyes flicker in surprise. She was wearing a tight and sexy black skirt with a top that was stretched too tightly at the chest region! It seemed that her "goods" underneath was ready to pop out at any time. Her waistline was very slim and formed a perfect curve.

Upon closer observation at the attractive figure that stood in front of him, Luo Yuan noticed that her skirt was also very tight - exposing her plump hips which gave her a perfect hourglass shape. She also had a stunning pair of long fair legs which models would kill to have. Just a mere glance at her would cause accelerated secretion of hormones in men. Moreover, coupled with an innocent and shy face, she would just drive any man crazy!

"Mr. Luo, please take a seat. It's great to see you!" Mayor Song greeted Luo Yuan with a warm welcome while pushing away his file which was already open on the table.

"It's great to see you too!" Luo Yuan quickly shook himself out of his sinful thoughts, smiled and shook hands with Mayor Song. He then proceeded to sit down on the sofa.

"It's shocking that such a thing happened in Desert City. The incident of rebellions has caused most of the members from the upper management to get into trouble. Even Officer Liu and I were

brainwashed. The responsibility of the huge losses and casualties caused in Desert City are all on my shoulders, no one else is to blame." Mayor Song said with a bitter face and a heavy heart.

"Mayor Song, you don't have to blame yourself. After all, this is beyond the reach of human beings. What's more, everything is now back to normal. You're a big hero for saving Desert City." Luo Yuan said with a smile.

Mayor Song still looked depressed but he felt slightly relieved by Luo Yuan's assuring words. He waved his hand and said, "Mr. Luo, I'm sure you're joking. You are not a government official so you do not know the seriousness and severity of this political event. If my superiors do not accuse me on this matter, I'd be very contented."

Luo Yuan was stunned as he did not find any abnormal behavior from Mayor Song. He was aware of the official bureaucratic rules and it did not look like he was being mind-controlled. Luo Yuan then said, "Based on the situation in Desert City right now, I believe the upper management would make appropriate considerations. After all, this place is already considered an enemy-occupied area, right? Oh, Mayor Song, can I know where all the rebellions are located now?"

Mayor Song was about to speak again but he suddenly paused. The sexually-appealing figure in the room was walking towards them in a seductive manner with two cups of tea on a tray. It smelled good. "Tea for two, please." Mayor Song spoke politely.

Once the woman left, Luo Yuan said with a smile, "I didn't ask earlier... Who is this?"

"Secretary Zheng suffered a misfortune from the incident with the rebellions. This is my temporary secretary," said Mayor Song in a heavy tone.

While Luo Yuan expressed grief for Secretary Zheng, he also began to be suspicious. Initially, he had slight doubt but now he could almost draw the conclusion confidently. There was a hidden rule which is practiced amongst government officials that they ought to hire similar-gendered secretaries to maintain their image and avoid any unnecessary criticism. Moreover, the lady looked like a slut which would certainly destroy any politician's image. Luo Yuan could not believe that Mayor Song, who prioritized his image, would take the risk of hiring a lady like her.

Mayor Song seemed to have sensed Luo Yuan's thoughts at that moment. He then explained helplessly, "In fact, she is my niece. A lot of people here know her. Too many things have happened recently and the staff attrition rate is very serious. Thus, I asked her to assist me temporarily. However, the official secretary would be assigned by upper management when they find a suitable evolved man.

...

After a bit more chit chat, Luo Yuan left the municipal hall. As he observed that the situation at the refuge had returned to normal, he did not know why he still felt depressed! Before leaving, Luo Yuan asked a few people regarding the identity of Mayor Song's niece and it was indeed true. Each person's facial expressions were genuine and some men subconsciously expressed admiration to her



flawless, picture-perfect, beauty. Luo Yuan stared at them for a long time but could not see any flaws or abnormalities on their faces. If they were indeed acting, then, almost everyone could get an Oscar!

At this moment, Luo Yuan suddenly thought of his comrades. He controlled his urge to look for Huang Jiahui and his other team members. Despite seeing things turn back to normal, the situation was still unclear to Luo Yuan and perhaps someone was monitoring him. He might expose his weakness and get them into trouble if he went to meet them. Luo Yuan tried to avoid being sighted again as he headed back to the basement.

...

Two days had now passed.

Luo Yuan had disguised himself daily and entered secretly to observe basement two of the shelter. Thus far, he had not found anything strange or abnormal. In fact, those evolved men who had been detained earlier were even gradually released.

The next afternoon, there was a public execution in front of the municipal hall. More than two dozen criminals were tied up and arranged in a long line. There were a lot of people who looked vaguely familiar to Luo Yuan which included evolved men who surrendered to the rebellion as well as government servants who took the initiative to surrender.

According to the judge, there were two rebels' remnants there as

well. Luo Yuan immediately looked towards the two people in the first row when he heard this announcement. There was a man and a woman with vastly different expressions on their faces. The woman looked numb with nothing in her eyes and she seemed to have given up on life. On the other hand, the man held his head high and still looked rebellious.

Luo Yuan felt that he looked familiar although he could not confirm at the time. He pondered for a long time but could not recall where and when he had seen this person before. The group of rebellions rarely left their rooms during the day to avoid being exposed. Sometimes, they even hid inside their rooms all day long. Luo Yuan suddenly recalled that one morning, as he was ready to go out for a breather, he happened to see this person return when he opened the door. Upon a second glance, Luo Yuan noticed that his eyes were striking and they left an impression on him. Perhaps that's why he could still remember him.

"How could he be a rebel?" Luo Yuan was confused. The official suspect now became uncertain to him. "Could it be that the woman is the hidden mind controller?"

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" A burst of gunfire could be heard and Luo Yuan was alerted by it. He immediately looked at them and saw all the corpses lying on the ground. Most of their bodies still moved for a while but then came to a complete stop in a short time. The new weapons used during the public execution were so powerful that it caused its targets heads to be completely shattered. If a normal gun was used then the spasms would last longer. Many of the audiences present screamed due to shock and some began to puke due to the sheer gruesomeness that they witnessed.

It was very easy to separate those who have evolved apart from those who were not after they turned into corpses. Normal prisoners took less than a minute to completely stop twitching. However, those who were evolved, especially those with higher physical strength, lasted about three minutes before they stopped jerking. Some of the particularly powerful evolved humans were still twitching incessantly after five minutes. With regards to the two rebels, Luo Yuan were concerned about, the woman was dead but as Luo Yuan suspected, she might be the mind controller so her body should be no difference than the bodies of ordinary peoples. As for the man, after the rest of the rebels being executed had stopped twitching, his body continued to twitch for more than three minutes after that and then finally stopped. He was indeed an evolved man and his strength was at least ranked at level four.

The corpses were soon quickly placed into body bags and trucked away. The ground was also cleaned by the sanitation workers. However, the smell of blood remained in the air even though it was not obvious that a public execution had just happened here. The crowd had dispersed since there was nothing more to see. Some people were excited and continued chatting as they were stimulated by the killing but Luo Yuan could only frown as he felt something was wrong. It seems that a key piece of information was missing from the puzzle.

He was so caught up in his thoughts that he suddenly felt a burst of anxiety as a sense of panic grew from the bottom of his heart. He quickly scanned the surroundings but nothing was found. Just when he thought it was another illusion, Luo Yuan suddenly felt the ground tremor violently. The people in the crowd fell to the ground and there was a lot of screaming and crying in the shelter.

Luo Yuan's body shook slightly as the earthquake occurred. He quickly adjusted his center of gravity to improve his stability and his feet were then rooted to the ground and never left the ground no matter how strong the earthquake continued to tremor.

Suddenly a "kachak!" loud noise was heard. The ground further in front of him collapsed instantly and formed a huge pit with a radius of more than 10 meters! A warehouse happened to be in the vicinity, and walls around the warehouse collapsed as the supporting foundation was missing. Many machinery and equipment inside the warehouse were exposed to the public but soon a lot of dust and gravel then fell and occupied the entire space.

Luo Yuan looked somber. Desert City was built in the desert, hence, the fluid-like soft ground was not suitable for construction of buildings. It would be fine if there were no earthquakes but once it happens, no matter how strong a building is, it could not escape from a collapse. After about 10 seconds, the earthquake gradually subsided but the entire place had now become a mess.

# Chapter 297: Luring The Culprit (I)

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The magnitude of the earthquake this time was at least seven on the Richter Scale!

A lot of people fell on the floor and were injured after the strong force impacted them and they were clearly panicked except for a few unlucky ones who were now buried under the collapsed walls. The rest of the people were basically safe and sound.

Here in this post-apocalyptic sanctuary, the framework of the building itself was quite strong but the loose sand underneath it was its downfall that led to its collapse during the earthquake. It would most likely only suffer a few cracks if it were not for the weak foundation.

"There is someone underneath this collapsed wall! Please, come and help to dig the rubble!" One person in the crowd screamed. Due to the cruelty and harshness at the end of the world, the whole society was always in a state of war. Thus, people here were more united than before the start of the apocalypse. They were also more disciplined. The people nearby, regardless whether injured or not, came forward to help. Luo Yuan also quickly went to help lift the stones away!

The earthquake had just stopped but there were still aftershocks that could be felt. Rubbles were still falling through the cracks and although everyone could not stand firmly, no one backed off from the aftershock.

Luo Yuan was strong enough to carry a few hundred kilograms of concrete himself, thus with his help, the efficiency was improved several times. It should be noted that the walls of the refuge were much thicker than the normal ones you would see in houses as these were built for defense purposes. It was approximately one meter thick and there was a layer of 10cm thick steel plates in the middle so it could withstand damage even from heavy artillery. The weight of the collapsed wall was far more than 10 tons so even Luo Yuan, who is such a powerful evolutionary human, would be completely crushed and unlikely to survive if he suffered the same fate. When the giant rocks were removed, several corpses that had been deformed were quickly exposed.

"Quickly, she's still alive!" A man shouted.

The crowd quickly gathered around and cautiously moved the rocks away. She was very fortunate as the collapsed wall had space in between that was sufficient for her to move around. Thus, she was not injured at all. From her appearance, the girl seemed only 18 years old and looked rather pale. Her lips were clearly trembling and she could not speak a single word. When she was rescued, she kept on bowing to show her appreciation but remained tight-lipped.

After the rescue, Luo Yuan wandered around the second floor of the refuge. He found that there was not only one collapse but in fact three! One of the most serious ones created a pit which had a radius of about 30 - 40 meters. A lot of concrete boulders tightly blocked the whole space and only a few rays of light could leak through from the slit at the top.

...

Luo Yuan went back to the sewer with a heavy heart and soon realized that the situation in the sewer was even worse. A lot of the pipelines were broken and large amounts of sewage leaked everywhere. Several mutated beasts were scurrying around like headless flies to feast on the sewage. Luo Yuan had to utilize his aura to block these highly toxic mutated beasts from coming near to him.

He returned to his temporary residence and saw that everyone was in a horrid state. Tong Jianliang, the long-bearded silent man, was lying on the floor with a black face and ferocious expression as if a devil had inhabited his body. Luo Yuan did not care much but when he went nearer to check on him, there was no longer any breath coming out of his body. A hint of black blood mixed with saliva dripped from his mouth which exuded a fishy smell. It looked like he was poisoned! Luo Yuan checked his body and found no obvious wounds and no bite marks on his clothes.

"What happened?" Luo Yuan asked with a solemn face.

"We don't know. He went hunting and when he came back he started to cough. We did not really care about it until he kept on coughing nonstop and suddenly vomited blood. After a while, he fainted and stopped breathing." Xu Zhiqiang said in a muffled tone.

The mutated beasts in the sewer were not of high rank and should not be a threat to the evolutionary humans here. No one would ever expect a dead case among these strong people.

"Ahem!" Wen Yujie suddenly coughed a bit.

Everyone's face changed as they looked at her. Wen Yujie was confused at first but when she thought of the symptoms faced by Tong Jianliang, her face turned serious and she said, "Why... why do you all look at me like this? I did not go out, it is just a little itch in my throat."

Before she completed her sentence, she experienced a few heavy coughs which made it look like she almost coughed her lungs out. The group subconsciously took a few quick steps back and stared at her worriedly.

Wen Yujie coughed until her face was flushed. She tried to speak and said, "I ... I ... How could I..." However, every time she uttered a few words she was interrupted by coughing again. Luo Yuan found that a hint of black gas began to cover her neck. He did not dare to delay and quickly walked over to grab Wen Yujie.

"Luo Yuan, don't touch me!" Wen Yujie quickly said. Her eyes were all red. She finally realized that she was also infected and might not be alive for long.

"Just shut up. Everyone else please turn away." Luo Yuan said without any facial expression.

Xu Zhiqiang and the others quickly turned around and dared not look or disobey Luo Yuan's command. The next moment, they heard a tearing sound. Wen Yujie's shirt was ripped off exposing



her quivering breasts. However, this seductive sight did not distract Luo Yuan's attention. He took a peek and felt that his scalp was tingling. Her belly was almost filled with black gas and her veins looked like black earthworms slowly wriggling. It looked scary and horrible.

Wen Yujie who was blushing on her face also looked down. She shuddered at that sight. Her face suddenly became pale. She looked desperate and tried to break free from Luo Yuan to prevent him from being infected too, "Quickly get away from here. I can't be saved..."

Luo Yuan was stunned to the point where he did not hear anything. His left hand tightly grabbed her smooth shoulders and no matter how she struggled he did not move away. Wen Yujie felt his determination to help her and tears began to roll down her cheek.

Luo Yuan raised his right hand and pressed on her chest with a strong force. He turned his Will into treatment. The black gas that was spreading at a fast speed suddenly stopped flowing and after a few seconds, it started to subside.

Wen Yujie was shocked to the point where she had forgotten to struggle. The warmth from Luo Yuan's palm on her chest calmed her down and reduced the intolerable itch in her throat. She felt extremely comfortable and could not help but groan loudly. When the fear of death disappeared, she recovered feeling embarrassed. Her face became flushed and even her tender fair chest cast a rosy color. Luo Yuan's warm hand was like magic that made her whole body weak and she could barely stand.

"Are you done?" When Wen Yujie saw that her whole body became white and delicate again, she asked with trembling voice.

Luo Yuan did not speak. He continued for another 10 seconds before he released his palm.

Wen Yujie quickly turned to get dressed but she realized that her clothes here torn off rather than removed. It was as an emergency so it was justified. She could barely cover her chest with what remained.

"Wear this." Luo Yuan noticed her situation and quickly took off his own coat. This coat was not an equipment but rather a normal one that he obtained a few days ago.

Wen Yujie replied shyly and did not reject. She picked up the coat and carefully put it on. It was kind of comfortable and she enjoyed the warmth and safeness of not having her breasts exposed. When she had this thought in her mind, her face suddenly blushed again.

Luo Yuan was having a slight headache when he noticed her ambiguous look. The feeling that he deliberately controlled earlier seemed to have warmed up again. Xu Zhiqiang and Xiao Baihong turned around and saw that Wen Yujie had completely recovered. They were shocked. Particularly Xu Zhiqiang as the leader of the evolutionary humans... he was certain that Luo Yuan was an earth-based evolutionary human.

"Since when did earth-based evolutionary humans have the

ability to heal?" He asked.

"We cannot stay here anymore. We have to get out now." Luo Yuan's voice interrupted his musings. "I suspect that this earthquake has broken a huge crack under the sewer and led out a powerful poisonous mutated beast." Everyone thought about it and started to worry. They were in a sewer which was dirty and wet. It was the sort of place that could attract all kinds of poisonous beasts.

The mutated beasts in the sewer were not a big threat because it was relatively clean. However, at the bottom of the sewer, there was filthy water which gathered a lot of poisonous insects and animals. It was never cleaned after the completion of Desert City and thus the mutated beasts were most likely upgraded to a more dangerous level.

Prior to this, the shelter had a thick foundation so it could block most of the large-sized mutated beasts. Only a few small mutated beasts could sneak in through the cracks. However, after this earthquake, that will no longer be the case.

"Where are we going if we don't stay in the sewer?" Xiao Baihong asked with some concern.

"Go to where you are supposed to go." Luo Yuan hesitated and said. He continued, "The city has now returned to normal and you are all not wanted people anymore. I believe that they will not change their mind."

While he was talking, he suddenly had a thought that struck his mind. Perhaps it was the intuition from his heart. He had always suspected that the real mind controller was not dead yet but rather hiding and waiting for the right time to take revenge.

If he continued to analyze based on this thought, the previous two who were executed by the firing squad might not have been the actual culprits. The man might be the real deal but the lady might be an imposter. For a powerful mind controller, controlling a person to kill themselves was too easy.

Luo Yuan thought to himself that if a public leader could be easily controlled by the mind controller to the point where everyone else did not know anything about it, then this mind controller must be very powerful. Luo Yuan had little confidence that he could be completely immune to his or her powers, however, he was probably just scaring himself. Over the past few days, Luo Yuan had been exposed to the public so he or she had the opportunity to control him. Since it did not happen, it became apparent that the enemy had limitations to deal with him. Now that the enemy had lost so many people in the team, the strength of this mind controller should be on the lower end.

Xu Zhiqiang and the rest were the best evolutionary humans in Desert City. Luo Yuan imagined that if he were the hidden mind controller he would not have let go of these people. Perhaps this was an opportunity to lure the mind controller out in the open.

## Chapter 298: Luring The Culprit (II)

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"D-Level Mission: Puppet Master – Locate and kill a mysterious mind controller."

"Duration: Five days - Accept / Cancel"

The system notification suddenly resounded in his mind.

He was slightly startled, but he knew that his idea a moment ago had prompted the mission.

As he could only assume initially, this was now enough to confirm his assumptions.

Upon acquiring the system, regardless of how bizarre the mission was, the proposed task had always been so apt and befitting; not a single error since.

It seemed like it had a pair of omnipresent eyes and there was nothing in the world that could be kept from it. Even when things are yet to be certain, the system had always been so confident. At times, when Luo Yuan thought about its astounding accuracy, he could not help but feel slightly disturbed. The more he knew, the queasier he felt.

A thought flashed across his mind, and his heart sank that very

moment. He realized that he had been underestimating the puppeteer.

"It turned out to be D-class mission!" He could not help but think.

...

"We'll part ways now; if anything happens, you can come right to me," said Luo Yuan, giving a pat on Xu Zhiqiang's shoulder.

Xu Zhiqiang nodded his head and was slightly emotional. Including that one time during the jailbreak, Luo Yuan had practically saved him twice, and this debt was too great to repay. He had not given his thanks, but his gratefulness was deeply engraved in his heart.

"Boss, can I tag along?" said Zhang Wu, standing nearby.

Luo Yuan thought for a while and said, "It's not the time yet; maybe next time. Now, I have some unfinished business to attend to."

Luo Yuan gave each of them a pat on the shoulder. When it was Wen Yujie's turn, seeing her slightly reddened eyes, Luo Yuan could not help but to hesitate and give her a hug, "Take care!" said Luo Yuan, as he released her from his embrace.

"Yes! You too, take care," said Wen Yujie, trying to remain calm.

The guards of the sewer maintenance room had long since disappeared. Shielded by Wen Yujie's illuminating ability, the group quickly left.

Luo Yuan watched them as they were leaving. After ensuring that everyone was a distance away, he opened the cuffs of his sleeve, took out the remaining dead skin and stuffed it into the pocket of his trousers.

In fact, when he was patting each of them goodbye, he had activated his synthesizing ability and a small amount of the dead skin had been absorbed into their clothing. Through this imprint, as long as they were not too far away, he could still clearly monitor their wellbeing anytime.

With his agility at 15 points, almost 7.5 times the normal speed of ordinary people, any light movement was almost undetectable. The most they felt was a pat on the shoulder and a sudden warmth, which could be taken for an illusion.

Luo Yuan closed his eyes for a moment to sense their movement and found that the group had parted ways, with each of them embarking on a different path.

His expression darkened, and he turned back towards the sewer instead.

Although the sewer and the evacuation route were enclosed and separated from each other, there was still air circulation, albeit a

weak one. Due to the earthquake, the exchange of air between the two areas from the collapsed partition, coupled with the leakage of an unknown gas from the sewer, had proved to be a deadly source of danger.

The grim-faced Luo Yuan walked hurriedly towards the sewer. In just a short time, it was filled with dead bodies of mutated beasts. Even the stronger ones and the ones resistant to toxin were scampering and struggling to their last breath to stay alive.

The faint smell of toxic waste had almost suffused the whole space, but the air was carrying a trace of abnormally sweet scent. To be extra cautious, Luo Yuan held his breath. This type of toxic gas was extremely strong, so much so that even evolved people such as Tong Jianliang and Wen Yujie were unable to withstand it. Even Luo Yuan himself was also unable to guarantee that he could leave this place alive.

As there were no prompts from the system, Luo Yuan guessed that this noxious gas may not be very strong, apart from its toxicity, which was the trickiest part.

Luo Yuan crouched down from time to time to check on the degree of rigor mortis of the carcasses of the mutated beasts, to pinpoint the source of the noxious gas. With his physique and lung capacity, if he was not performing some strenuous exercise, he could hold his breath for 30 to 40 minutes which was more than enough.

Finally, after five or six minutes, Luo Yuan stopped right at a crack that was caused by the earthquake.



The creature looked similar to a toad and was about the size of a small car.

The back of the toad-like creature was fiery red, with numerous pustules pulsating non-stop with each breath. Occasionally, there was some yellow liquid flowing from the pustules, giving a very uncomfortable and sickening vibe.

The abdomen of the creature was black, its surface was smooth and glossy, but was densely covered with both large and small round marks as thick as a thumb. Once in a while, the marks moved slightly, but with Luo Yuan's sharp vision, he immediately discovered that this were not marks but rather, countless number of parasitic ticks.

Just one look at the parasites sent a tingling sensation down Luo Yuan's body.

These parasitic worms seemed to be full of blood, as each one of them was plump and round! However, the poisonous gas that was emitting from the toad seemed to have no effect on those parasitic worms.

The food chain was indeed a full cycle - there was no exception to it!

From the imposing manner of the creature, its strength must be a level between blue and dark blue. To Luo Yuan, this strength could be simply dealt with, by a single blow.

The whole of the creature was poisonous, as well as extremely repulsive. Knitting his brows together, Luo Yuan had no choice but to muster all his Will, and formed a thin layer of film on his body, to prevent the poison from sputtering onto him.

Next was the actual fight, which was actually nothing to shout about!

With his terrifyingly strong force, the other party was too scared to move; its whole body was trembling. Even when Luo Yuan was steadily advancing, the creature made no resistance, and sat docilely like a frightened quail, before being beheaded by his sword. A dark black vile liquid splattered about three meters high, and the ground started to corrode.

The whole body was poisonous; hence, he certainly could not let it rot here.

Corpses of mutated beasts that was killed by the poisonous gas had littered the ground, and the bodies could be seen almost everywhere. Luo Yuan removed the body fat from each of the bodies, and very quickly, a pile of lard was formed. This type of body fat had a high oil content and was highly inflammable.

After Luo Yuan had set the pile of fat on fire, the flame began to rage, and rose up to three meters high. Soon after, the body of the toad also began to burn under the raging flames.

He heaved a sigh of relief. Apart from radioactive toxins, other

toxins, whether biological or chemical, could be broken down with high temperature. Therefore, the source of the toxin could completely be disintegrated after being burnt.

Luo Yuan waited for almost half an hour for the body to be completely burned to ashes. Only then, he was convinced that it was safe and quickly left the place.

As he was walking, he suddenly stopped in his tracks. He sensed that one of the imprints that he had sent out seemed to be affected by a force, as it began vibrating incessantly.

However, just as he was ready to respond to it, the imprint trembled violently for a while, as though a bubble has been punctured, burst, and disappeared without a trace. The interaction signal in his mind was quickly broken off.

Luo Yuan's heart sank. He had not expected his opponent to act so soon. It was barely even half an hour before a move was made.

The one that was caught was Xiao Baihong. Before he had synthesized the dead skin, some of them had more, while some of them had less of it. So naturally, the degree of sensitivity was different for each of them. Among them, Wen Yujie had the most, thus her imprint was the most sensitive, followed by Xu Zhiqiang, Zhang Wu and Xiao Baihong, while the weakest was Yang Zhiqing. Each of the imprints was able to connect to Luo Yuan separately and were distinct from one another.

The imprint that had currently disappeared had clearly

belonged to Xiao Baihong!

## Chapter 299: Luring The Culprit (III)

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"Captain Xiao, our Defense Division is waiting for its revival. Many members, including Captain Hu were killed during the last mission. As we suffered a great loss, your responsibility is indeed of large scale," Mayor Song said painfully, "And your current most important mission is to reform the Defense Division upon your return. Also, learn from this lesson and improve the security system. Are you confident enough to undertake this task?"

Not long after Xiao Baihong left the sewer, some police and military personnel came by, wanting him to go to the city council office. At the beginning, he was worried and had doubts, thinking that it was a trap. After some hesitation, he decided to go.

He found out that he was not caught upon arrival, but had an important mission instead! Xian Baihong was stunned for a moment before he could recover, and assured loudly, "Don't worry, sir! I hereby make a military pledge to promise that the last mistake will not be repeated again in the Defense Division!"

"Very well, I hope that you can deliver as promised. You may head back first and if possible, do submit a proposal by tomorrow," Mayor Song said.

Mo Li sent Xiao Baihong to the gate. She then saw him off with her bashful and innocent face, without so much as a flicker of smile.

There were too many unpredictable situations recently that

caught her off guard, hence, she now handled them passively!

With her strong ability and cautiousness, she soon controlled the top ranking people of the Desert City. Nevertheless, before she could heave a sigh of relief, what came after was truly shocking. First of all, the Spec and Mr. Xie lost their lives and then, Su Yu was killed unbeknownst to many, at the city council.

In fact, Su Yu was very strong, and even had a record of killing a level six mutated beast. As he was the strongest evolved person she had ever seen, he was the strongest force she had. Therefore, his death made her feel insecure.

Her ability was similar to hypnosis but is much stronger, being able to penetrate deeper and have a stronger hold on the psyche. Common hypnosis can only hypnotize one's subconscious mind, but she could manipulate one's memory through their subconsciousness.

Hypnotizing only the subconscious mind allows one to break loose should one begin to feel uncomfortable, or when it goes against one's subconscious. However, manipulating the memory through a subconscious mind leaves no chance for the person to break loose, as it affects the deepest part of the brain, where the most memories were stored. Manipulation had the power to make one believe – no questions asked – as the memories which contradict with their conscience will be rebooted.

In other words, it can be considered as repairs made in one's memory!

For instance, when everyone in the city council was given an impression that she was Mayor Song's niece, nobody, even Mayor Song himself, doubted her identity. Over time, a conditioned memory had been formed.

A memory is not only the most precious asset of human beings but also one that is sacred and inviolable. The idea of "I" is formed as a result of memory, hence, the ability to distort one's memory was indeed terrifying.

She knew that if her ability was made known and exposed, no matter how she pleaded for mercy, it would be rendered useless.

Since Su Yu died, she felt that danger was creeping closer, as if a pair of indifferent eyes was watching her in the dark. If she errs, she will be struck down. The omnipresent danger had made her feel oppressed and frustrated, but she had no choice but to disguise herself. Even if she sent Hawk Eye to hell, she had no idea what could possibly happen!

She muttered to herself, and clenched her fists until her knuckles were pale, "Could it be him?"

If anyone wanted to identify the most dubious person, he would be the strongest evolved person at Desert City, Luo Yuan – without a doubt.

Previously, she tried to control Luo Yuan, but his soul's defense was extraordinarily strong. If the defense of a commoner was akin

to a fence where she could easily climb over, in comparison, the defense of Luo Yuan's soul would be likened to a thick and strong wall. As she was worried of being noticed, she only attempted for a very short while before stopping.

Then, she was startled from her deep thought by a few knocks on her door.

Mo Li was shocked and went to open the door. Previously, she had sent a message under Mayor Song's name to the Public Security Bureau, that they should inform the evolved person who escaped from prison to report to the city council's office. If they were found, they would be able to continue gathering them up.

As soon as she opened the door, a slight surprise came upon her.

"Why are you here again?" She asked.

The person standing in front of the door was Xiao Baihong, who had just left. After he looked at her with scrutiny, he said, "Something has happened, I want to look for Mayor Song!"

The tone of his voice obviously sounded different. According to her modified memory, he was supposed to be loyal and was even willing to sacrifice for her sake. Her heart skipped a beat. After she realized that something was different, she discovered more flaws, and how different he sounded, although he tried hard to imitate him. He was also a few inches taller.



He was definitely not Xiao Baihong; he was an impostor!

Mo Li's expression slightly changed but recovered very quickly. She said softly, "Captain Xiao, come with me."

The impostor was no other than Luo Yuan. He then followed Mo Li into an office.

"Captain Xiao, how can I help you?" Mayor Song asked unhappily after putting down his documents, as he saw him walking in nonchalantly as if there was no one else present.

"Hello Mayor Song, I'm sorry to disturb you. I'd like to ask if you happen to have any CCTV footage on who Xiao Baihong had met before?"

Meanwhile, Luo Yuan quickly changed his face back to his own.

Mayor Song jumped in shock. Even Mo Li was staring with utter shock at Luo Yuan, and suddenly felt insecure!

"Mr. Luo, why would you want to look like Captain Xiao, to meet me?" said Mayor Song with a forced smile, as he quickly recovered and sat down.

"It was very important. You'll find out later," Luo Yuan said with a smile. He was forced to act rashly. As soon as the imprint disappeared, he managed to track it down. Luo Yuan did not expect that the location of the accident was within the city council,

especially in the office of the Mayor, no less! He wanted to resolve the problem stealthily, but he could not do it due to the precariousness of the location.

"You wanted to look at the CCTV, could it be anything that happened to Captain Xiao?" Mayor Song became very serious and asked, with his eyebrows furrowed.

Luo Yuan shook his head, "Before I understand the whole situation, I'm sorry to say that I am unable to divulge any information!"

Mayor Song pondered for a moment, before he muttered, "CCTV..."

He obviously paused for a while before he continued, "It was good before today's earthquake, which seemed to have damaged the circuit. Is the problem serious?"

"Well, the issue was not very serious, but I still need a confirmation first. Considering the circumstances, I'm sorry to disturb you. I'll leave now!" Luo Yuan stood up immediately.

"Lili, send Mr. Luo off," Mayor Song said.

"It's alright, how could I possibly trouble a lady?" Luo Yuan said with a smile, but his heart spoke otherwise. He briskly walked towards the gate and stole a glance at the CCTV, which was emitting a weak red light before he left. He smirked as he knew

that his assumptions were right.

## Chapter 300: Luring The Culprit (IV)

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Mayor Song nodded in satisfaction after he saw that Mo Li had finished classifying those processed documents. Then, he took a look at the time and found out that it was already 11 o' clock at night. He said in astonishment, "I can't believe that it's already this late. I'm sorry to have you working overtime with me again. As it's not good to stay up late, please, go back now and take a rest."

Mo Li shook her head, smiling, and replied, "Uncle, you must be more tired than I am. As I'm still young, it's no big deal if I stay up late."

Being a prudent and a person of discretion, she always acts well after detailed planning. Therefore, regardless of any role that she was playing, she would carefully complete it to perfection.

"Oh, my dear!" Mayor Song said helplessly, "Go back, or else your aunt would be complaining again. I wouldn't want to listen to her nagging!"

As Mo Li had been busy throughout the day, she felt tired too. The earthquake that occurred just now had made her multitask furiously and also realize that she was able to run errands for Mayor Song.

"Alright, uncle. If so, I'll take my leave. Please have an early rest too!" Mo Li said as she left, but not before making Mayor Song a cup of tea first.

As it was already late at night, the city council office was rather empty, and clear footsteps were echoing along the quiet corridor. Mo Li had a strange gut feeling, which made her quicken her pace. For reasons she could not comprehend, she had been feeling insecure throughout the day.

Mo Li felt depressed and in no time, she had reached the gate where she saw two rows of armed soldiers standing upright. Numerous sentries, hidden and in clear sight that guarded the nearby vicinity had made Mo Li feel slightly relieved.

She wanted to call Xiao Baihong to pick her up, but desisted when she thought of the previously transformed Luo Yuan.

Gritting her teeth, Mo Li walked out of the high-security gate. The dim street light that flanked both sides of the road on a desolated night had induced cold sensations and goosebumps all over her body. Being an evolved person related to the mind, she always had relatively acute instincts and thus frowned because of the feelings that she harbored.

She used to walk about during the night and had also been living in the wild for a while. Being a strong evolved person, she had never felt any nyctophobia<sup>1</sup> like a common woman did. Therefore, the only explanation of how she felt, was because she was in great danger.

<sup>1</sup> fear of darkness

With a thought flashing through her mind, a silhouette seemed to be coming over from afar.

He seemed to be walking slowly, but he was in fact, rather hasty. Each step he took was about three to four meters far, hence, with just a few breaths, he was already about a hundred meters away. The dim street lights had created an effect that made him look like the Azrael, the demon from hell!

The silhouette was none other than Luo Yuan, and he stopped only when he was about thirty to forty meters away from Mo Li.

"You...what do you want to do?" asked Mo Li, upon seeing the bright, sharp Zhanmadao in Luo Yuan's hand. She then said in horror, "I...I'm the secretary of the mayor, consider the consequences well."

She acted excellently. If Luo Yuan had not been very confident, he would have been cheated.

Luo Yuan smirked, "Stop this act, would you? You've been exposing yourself."

Mo Li acted like a threatened young girl being and asked in fear, "What...what are you saying? I really don't know what you're talking about!"

"It seems like you still don't believe that I've already spotted the mistakes you've made. You think I'm the crafty one? Let me see,

how many identities are you playing? The niece of Mayor Song, the daughter of the direct superior of Master Liu, and yes, you're also the life savior of Xiao Baihong!"

Since Luo Yuan came out from the city council office, he wasted no time and adjourned to seek Master Liu and Xiao Baihong. As Master Liu was still afraid of Luo Yuan, he told him everything about Mo Li's origins. If the two identities were to be the same person, the life savior of Xiao Baihong should definitely be a joke. After all, Xiao Baihong would not have seen her before, as he was still under the drain when she appeared. Therefore, it was clearly an inexplicable flaw.

With Luo Yuan's taunts, the fearful expression on Mo Li's face was followed by a sigh and a frown. "Mr. Luo, you have your own methods while I have mine. We shall only mind our own business; why do you have to be so aggressive?"

She looked pitiful, as though putting her charms to good use, which somehow tempted others to cower in her embrace.

Even Luo Yuan was trying to suppress his heart too, as he continuing to speak coldly, "It's not about minding our own business. It's also because you are standing in my way and are a nuisance in my life. More importantly, your existence had made me feel insecure."

"What a domineering man... even I can feel arousal in myself. You feel insecure because you don't know me, but maybe after you do, we could work together," Mo Li chuckled and bent her body over seductively.

Luo Yuan had always been incisive in battles, but for no good reason, his heart was disturbed and was now indecisive. Nevertheless, his strong Will had soon made him realize that something had gone wrong. He could not believe how strong her powers were, and that he was affected even though they stood a distance away. Therefore, he focused his Will and eliminated all the distraction in his thoughts.

"Don't try to seduce me anymore. It's not effective on me... just let me send you to hell."

As he was focusing his Will, Mo Li could not manipulate him any further. She stopped smiling and her face became glum. Since it was proven futile, she no longer disguised herself but quickly walked towards Luo Yuan gravely, "You may be the one who will die instead."

"Maybe not!" Luo Yuan exclaimed, upon quickly retreating back a few steps backward, and whipped out an arm-sized long spear from his back simultaneously.

Handling a mind controller, Luo Yuan dared not go too near. Besides, he did not want to risk his life even though he was confident with his strong Will, as the D level mission would mean that she had similar battle effectiveness as he did.

Therefore, before he came, he had specially prepared a few long spears to assist him in battles such as these.



As soon as Mo Li saw the long spear that he held, she panicked. After all, she was already physically weak, and a bullet could kill her in a flash. She could no longer care about the distance and was emitting silver rays from her eyes; distorting the surrounding atmosphere.

Luo Yuan took a quick look, and it completely threw him off-guard. It was likened to the rubbing sounds of glass, ringing in his head, with endless hallucinations flashing through. His mind seemed to have a strong force that attacked his Will. Meanwhile, he was as sturdy as a rock rooted to the ground and did not even realize that his long spear had fallen onto the ground.

The charm of her mysterious silver eyes was bewitching. In addition to those delicate features and indifferent attitude, it very much made her glow like a goddess.

Everyone was different and life has always been unfair; some people were extremely wise and talented while some others were only bestowed average ability and work so hard to achieve nothing. As an innate evolved person, she had had the ability to bewitch prior to the apocalypse. With this natural ability and professional knowledge, she had become one of the world's few hypnotists who had the capability to hypnotize someone even when they were awake.

Nonetheless, the ability she had at that time was not obvious and was very weak. The apocalypse had further enhanced her ability to a state where she was soon out of control. As memory was something of a continuous flow and had to be logical, any manipulation would be disastrous, causing one to either become a

delinquent or succumb to mental problems. Therefore, her ability to manipulate memory was quickly discovered by the people, and she had to flee again and again.

It was only until half a year ago that the growth of her mental prowess slowed down, which allowed her to gradually be in control of her powers. Nevertheless, she had to perfect control of it. She needed to be careful not to exert herself too much whilst manipulating the memories of others, else, her energy would be exactly like what it is now; completely depleted.

The strong psychological attack had the ability to wipe off all traces of memory, and leave nothing but the natural instinct of a newborn.

Mo Li pulled out a sharp blade from her waist and quickly walked towards Luo Yuan. Meanwhile, she was feeling disappointed as she could not control Luo Yuan's exceptionally strong Will, despite attempting many times.

She felt relieved anyway.

Luo Yuan furrowed his brows tightly, and he could no longer pay his attention to his surroundings. He was trying hard to retrieve his Sensory Perception to reinforce his defense. As the clock was ticking, his Will had become more focused, as if impurity had been eliminated, even though he was under a psychological attack.

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The sound of the system notification seemed to have popped up in his mind.

He started to relax, and an intangible force was pulsating from his body. He felt light-weighted and his body began to float into the air until he was an inch away from the ground. At that time, Mo Li had come up to him and was preparing to stab him in the chest.

Luo Yuan suddenly opened his eyes, in which a halo seemed to grow around it. His hands seemed to have blurred a bit and the dagger stabbed her through the eyes to the back of her skull.

Mo Li was stunned and could not believe what just happened. Along with the disappearing silver lights in her eyes, she slumped onto the floor!